Francis Dvornik

Origins of Intelligence Services

The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy.

$15.00

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The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy

FRANCIS DVORNIK

350 pages, 21 illustrations, 18 maps, 6 bibliographies, index

Efficient, swift, and dependable intelligence services were essential to the growth and well-being of every major empire in recorded history, as Dr. Francis Dvornik reveals. Tactics and devices of amazing subtlety, such as secret police, counter-intelligence, and, above all, swift communications, were employed even by the early civilizations of the ancient Near East. These services led to the establishment of thousands of miles of road networks with fortified way stations, and post systems complete with draft mules, relay riders on horseback, and carriages used as "stage coaches." Ingenious fire and smoke signal systems were devised, by which information could be relayed across whole continents within hours. Carrier-pigeon post services, possibly imported from China by early Arabic traders, provided incredibly swift communications. Perhaps the supreme accomplishment in its time was the vast intelligence network established by the Mongol Empire, which extended from the Pacific Ocean westward to the heart of central Europe. The Muscovite state, profiting from the Mongol example and the cumulative experience of all the eastern empires of the past, expanded from a small, isolated principality to the immense Russian empire of Ivan IV, the Terrible, with whose death the book concludes.

"Sometimes," writes Dr. Dvornik in his Preface, "even books have their own history, and the present work is no exception." In

(continued on back flap)

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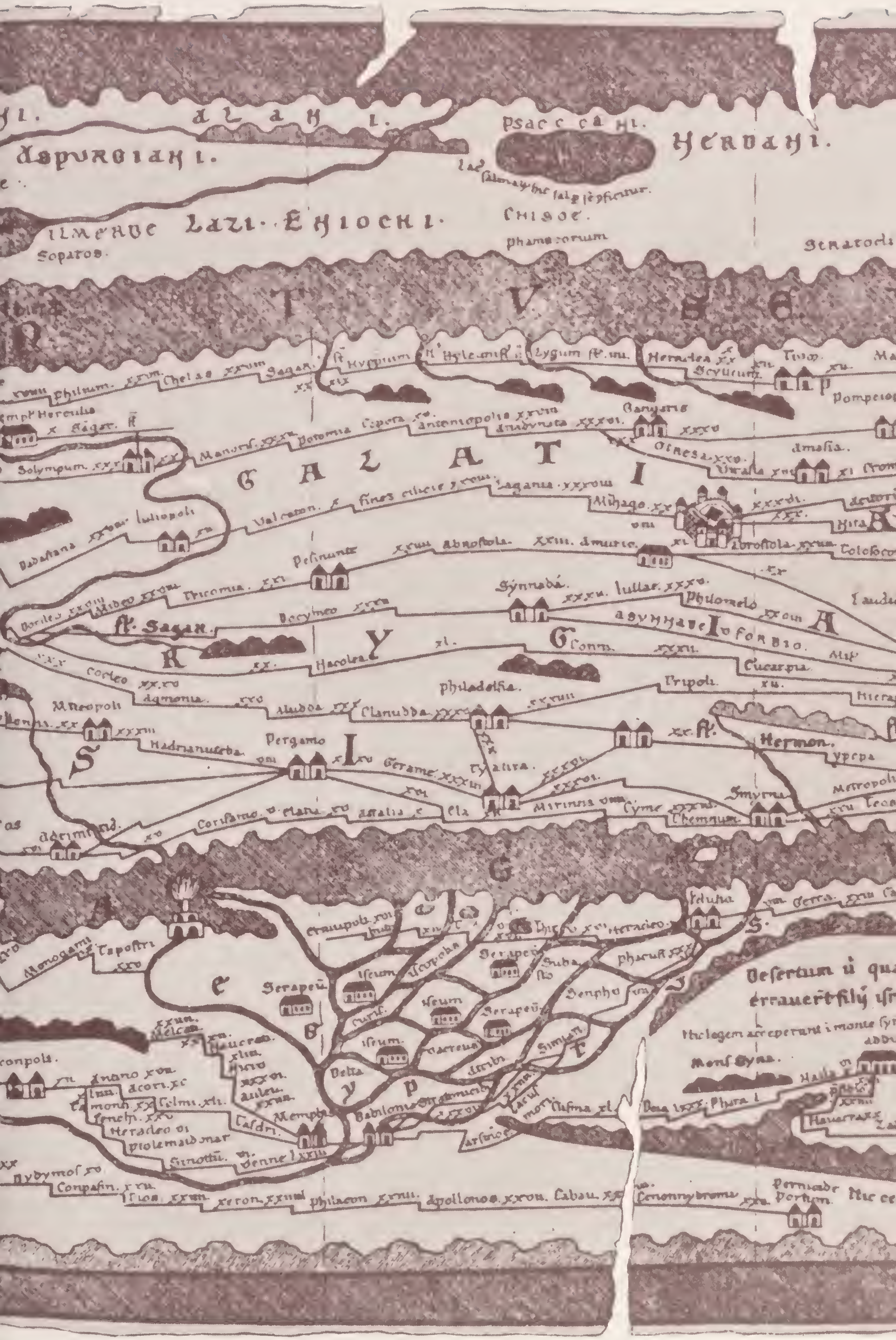
Cappate
Seracoe
Morum
Macara
ad promontorium
ad herbas
T h i n
Nicomedia
Cribulo
Prusias
Pheme
Alexandria troas
Ilio
Sminthium
Pretonio
Hormucopto
Lato
Diospoli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ASPURGIANI.
PSACCANI.
HERUANI.
Lac salinae ubi sal p se efficitur.
CHISOE.
phanacorum
ILMERUE LAZI · EHIOCHI.
Sopatos
Stratoclis
T V R E
Philum
Chelae
Sagar.
Hyppium
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Solympum
Manorii
Potomia
Cepora
Antoniopolis
Andrapa
Gangaris
Otresa
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GALATI
Valcaton
fines Cilicie
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Eccobriga
Dabastana
Iuliopoli
Pessinunte
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Amurio
Colosoco
Synnada
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Gerra
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Heracleo
Tapostri
Menogami
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Iseum
Busiris
Desertum ubi quadraginta annis errauerunt filii israel
Hic legem acceperunt in monte Syna
Mons Syna
Naucrati
Hermupoli
Delta
Memphi
Babylonia
Heliu
Arsinoe
Clysma
Phara
Haila
Hauarra
Conpasin
Ptolemaide
Tentyra
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Philacon
Apollonos
Cabau
Cenonnydrome
Permiade
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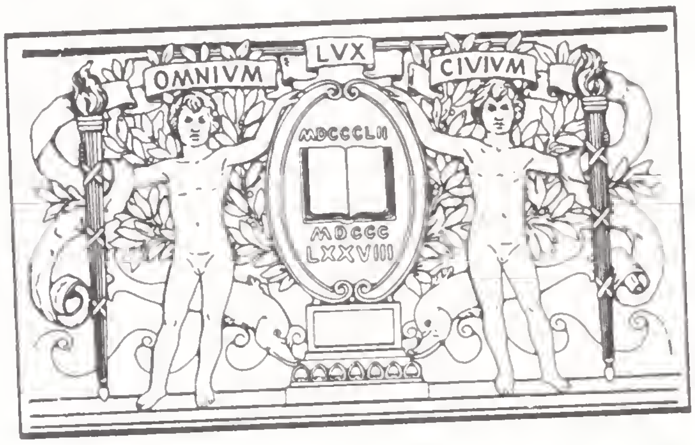
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ORIGINS OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, PERSIA, GREECE, ROME, BYZANTIUM, THE ARAB MUSLIM EMPIRES, THE MONGOL EMPIRE, CHINA, MUSCOVY

FRANCIS DVORNIK

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To the memory of General William J. Donovan
and to all those who worked with him,
or under his direction, throughout
World War II to the final victory
of the Allies in 1945.

Acknowledgments

I found most of the literary documents needed for this study in the Dumbarton Oaks Library. I am deeply obliged to the Honorable William R. Tyler, Director of Dumbarton Oaks, for his interest in my research and his encouragement to publish it. The staff of the Library of Congress was very helpful in procuring for me the books on Arabic, Mongol, and Chinese history not in the Dumbarton Oaks Library. My friend, Professor Peter Charanis of Rutgers University, read part of the manuscript and recommended it to Rutgers University Press for publication. My friend Godfrey Scheele read and prepared a part of the manuscript. Mrs. Joan Southcote-Aston, secretary and research assistant at Dumbarton Oaks, read the whole manuscript, and I am grateful to her for her help in both correcting and styling the final version. She also checked my references, made the final typescript, and assisted me in the proofreading.

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Abbreviations

AS	*Acta Sanctorum of the Bollandists* (1863–)
Bonn	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1828–1897)
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (Munich, 1892–)
CJ	*Corpus Iuris Civilis, I, Codex Justinianus,* ed. P. Krueger (Berlin, 1929)
Loeb	The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae historica, Auctores antiquissimi,* 5
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca,* ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1857–66)
RECA	*Pauly-Wissowa Paulys Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft, Neue Bearbeitung* . . . , ed. G. Wissowa and others (Stuttgart, 1893 seq.)
Teubner	*Bibliotheca Teubneriana,* Leipzig

Preface

Sometimes even books have their own history, and the present work is no exception. In 1948, when I was working at Dumbarton Oaks at the invitation of Harvard University, we received in the spring a visit from General William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. General Donovan disclosed his intention of writing a history of the Intelligence Service in order to show its importance in safeguarding the nation. He was looking for a scholar who would be able to write the first chapters on the origin and early development of such a service in the ancient world, and during the early Middle Ages. John S. Thacher, the then Director of the Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection, told General Donovan that I had given courses at Trinity College, Cambridge University, on the political philosophy of the ancient Middle East, Rome, and Byzantium, and that I could be of some help to him in his plan. I was willing to try, and, during the summers of 1948 and 1949, wrote the first two chapters on the ancient Near East and the Roman Empire.

I do not know if General Donovan was able to find any other collaborators, nor how far his own studies of this problem went. His death in 1959 probably killed the whole project. Since then I have had other obligations as a research professor at Dumbarton Oaks, but I did not entirely forget my first essays. I found new material while working on my book, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy. Origins and Background,* published in two volumes in 1966, which concerned the early Middle East, Rome, and Byzantium. The preparation of my lecture on Greek and Western Missions in the East for the International Congress of Historians, held in Moscow in 1970, induced me to study Mongolian and Chinese history, because the Latin missions to the Far East started only in the thirteenth century. The courses I gave on Slavic history at Harvard University acquainted me even more with the problems of Kievan Russia and Muscovy. The curiosity to find out by which means different régimes and empires were able to survive, often for centuries, although they generally neglected the social and economic welfare of their subjects, led me to the conviction that their survival was largely due to the efficient organization of intelligence services.

Finally, I decided to collect all such material that I had found, in a sense a by-product of my continuing research, and to publish it under the title *Origins of Intelligence Services*.

Because General Donovan's project was destined for a professional and a general audience, I have omitted footnotes and extensive scholarly discussion. However, most of the work is based on original sources, which are quoted in the text. Scholars interested in different problems will be able to verify both the quotations and my deductions according to the editions listed in the bibliography, which are easily accessible to specialists. Each chapter has a bibliography of sources and publications used in its preparation. The study of similar institutions in the Arab Muslim empires presented some difficulties. Fortunately, although many Arabic historical works are as yet unpublished, most of the sources needed for such a study are available in English or French translations.

This present work is a fresh attempt to treat a subject generally neglected by historians, and it may help us better to understand certain historical events, both past and present. It will not replace the project which General Donovan was prevented from realizing and in which I had the impression he wished to pay tribute to his collaborators among the Allies. However, this attempt may show us, as he wished to emphasize, the importance of a good intelligence service for the security of our country, as well as the dangers inherent in its abuse.

Francis Dvornik

Dumbarton Oaks
October 1973

Origins of Intelligence Services

I

Intelligence in the Ancient Near East

Introduction — Egypt and the Hittites — Babylonia and Assyria — Persian Intelligence and Royal Post Service — Greeks, Hellenistic States, Ptolemaic Egypt.

The importance of a good intelligence service for the security of the modern state is generally recognized by responsible statesmen, although not as strongly as it should be. It is sometimes believed that intelligence, with all its blessings and shadows, is a modern invention. It is true that the immense progress in science, techniques, and communications made since the eighteenth century has contributed greatly to the organization of intelligence services, and made their importance for the preservation of régimes, nay, for the existence of states, more evident. But intelligence is not a modern invention. Its history can be traced very far back into the past, almost to the beginnings of the first organizations of human beings, organizations which bore a resemblance to what can be called states.

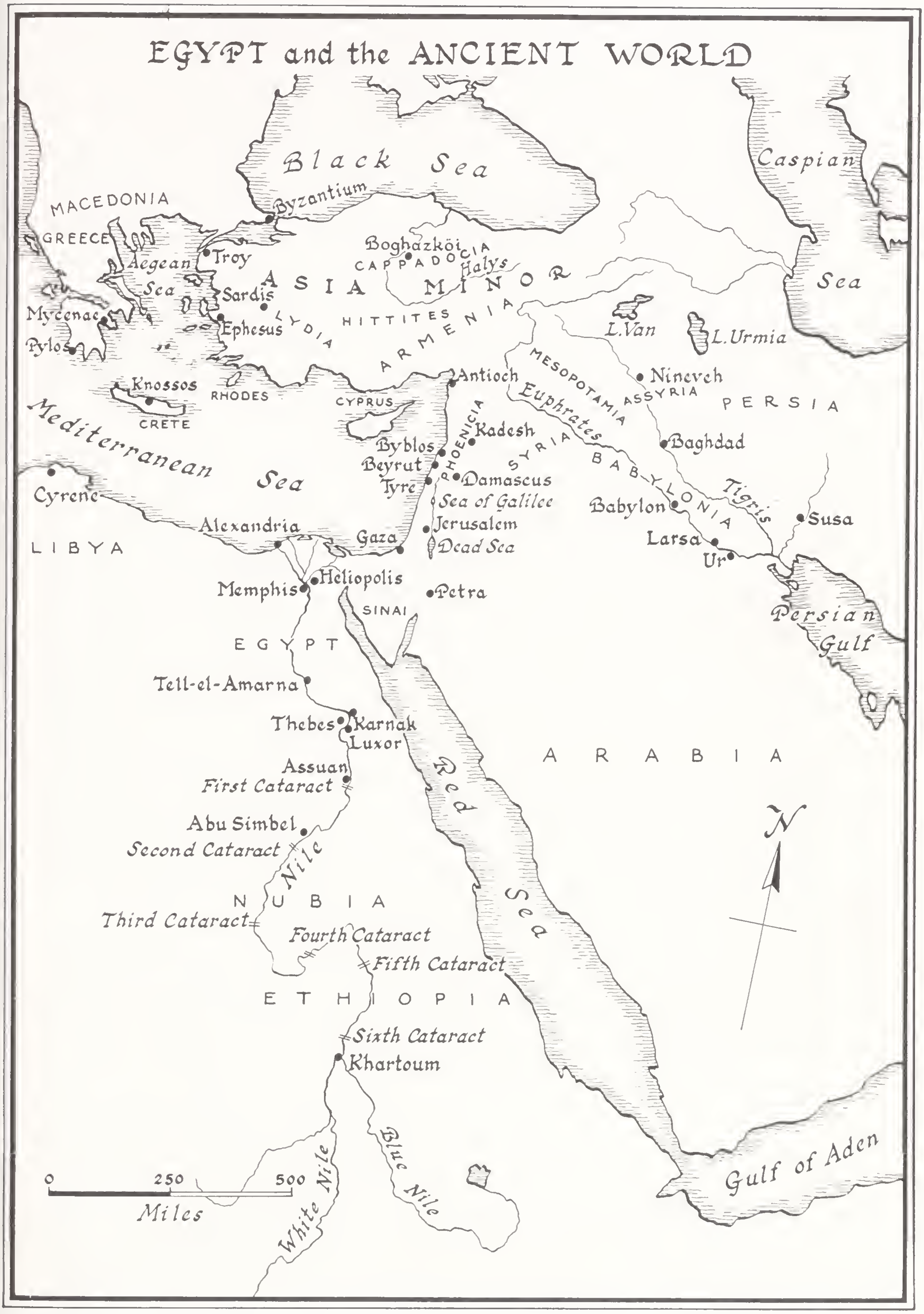
Such organizations first emerged in the Near East, which is in so many respects the cradle of human culture and of our civilization. Ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia, as well as the Hittite Empire, left a rich inheritance in the political field as well as in the cultural field. They all elaborated upon the concept of an absolute hereditary monarchy; they all brought the concept of royalty into the closest association with that of the divinity, Egypt even going so far as to adopt the principle of a divine royalty and to devise a religious cult in its honor; and they all conceived and tried to bring into reality for the first time in human history the idea of a universal empire, held together and ruled over by an absolute monarch who based his right on divine authority.

The concept of a universal empire which they tried to realize was, of course, limited by the insufficient geographical knowledge of those early periods. But, even so, the idea of political expansion owes its origin to the first mighty rulers and conquerors from the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris. Political expansion revealed the need for very rapid information as to the situation prevailing among neighbors, the reactions of subject nations, and the sentiments of those citizens of the original state, so often overburdened with heavy taxation and harassed by wars. Because of all this an intelligence service was created. On its smooth functioning depended in large part the security of the empires and the political régimes which had created the need. So it came about that the ancient cultural states of the Nile and the Middle East bequeathed to later generations the first primitive beginnings of a state intelligence service.

Political expansion on a large scale was first begun by the Egyptians. Following the spirited overthrow of the foreign rule of the Hyksos, the Eighteenth Dynasty established its supremacy over Nubia, Ethiopia, and Libya. Thutmose I (1525–ca. 1512 B.C.) pushed into Syria and reached the Euphrates. His conquests were successfully defended and extended by Thutmose III. In the tablets of Tell-el-Amarna, which contain the archives of his successors Amenophis III and IV, we are given a clear picture of this first universal empire which extended from Libya to Babylonia and to Assyria, and from Ethiopia to Cyprus and the isles of Greece. From 1580 to 1350 B.C. the empire flourished; it was followed by the Second Empire, founded by the rulers of the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1319–1200 B.C.), with Seti I and Ramesses II as its greatest heroes.

The last rulers of the Nineteenth Dynasty spent their days in defending their predecessors' conquests; with the death of Ramesses II, the expansive power of Egypt petered out. Then came the decadence of the empire. Egypt first fell under the supremacy of the Libyans, and subsequently under that of the Ethiopians. Finally, the new "universal" Empire of the Assyrians took over the lands once conquered by the Pharaohs and added Egypt to its numerous provinces. But Assyria, in turn, was conquered by the Persians.

It was therefore natural that the need for fast information from all the provinces of the empire as to the attitudes of neighboring tribes and nations was first felt in Egypt. Unfortunately, we have no direct evidence as to how the Pharaoh obtained this information. The conquests in Asia were under the control of a "governor of the north countries." We are given the name of the first in the lists of governors, a general famous under Thutmose III named T'hutiy (J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, p. 312), one of whose exploits has amused many



EGYPT and the ANCIENT WORLD

Black Sea
Caspian Sea
MACEDONIA
GREECE
Byzantium
Troy
Aegean Sea
Sardis
Mycenae
Pylos
Ephesus
LYDIA
ASIA MINOR
Boghazköi
CAPPADOCIA
Halys
HITTITES
ARMENIA
L. Van
L. Urmia
Knossos
RHODES
CRETE
CYPRUS
Antioch
MESOPOTAMIA
Nineveh
ASSYRIA
PERSIA
Mediterranean Sea
Euphrates
PHOENICIA
Kadesh
Byblos
Beyrut
Tyre
SYRIA
Damascus
Sea of Galilee
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
Baghdad
BABYLONIA
Tigris
Babylon
Larsa
Ur
Susa
Cyrene
LIBYA
Alexandria
Gaza
Heliopolis
Memphis
Petra
SINAI
EGYPT
Persian Gulf
Tell-el-Amarna
Thebes
Karnak
Luxor
ARABIA
Assuan
First Cataract
Red Sea
N
Abu Simbel
Second Cataract
Nile
NUBIA
Third Cataract
Fourth Cataract
Fifth Cataract
ETHIOPIA
Sixth Cataract
Khartoum
Gulf of Aden
0
250
500
Miles
White Nile
Blue Nile

generations of Egyptians. He captured Joppa by sending his best warriors into the town concealed in panniers carried by donkeys. This adventure has survived in a charming Egyptian tale which is probably the prototype of the famous oriental tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." Most probably the governor's duty was to collect information and send it to his master. But this kind of activity did not interest the Egyptians, and no tale has survived to immortalize the cleverness with which T'hutiy, or his successors, outwitted the intrigues of the vanquished city kings and the alertness of jealous neighbors. We do not even know how the office of the governor functioned, or what the exact relations were between him and the local petty kings left to rule their little kingdoms according to native custom, although under Egyptian sovereignty. Such a situation called for great alertness on the part of the governor.

Then there were the commanders of Egyptian garrisons stationed in some of the conquered cities, and natives who gained a living from the Egyptians. These were the support of the resident governor and possessed many ways of securing reliable information. Other sources of news were the nobles, called "King's messengers," who were sent to subjected countries to collect tribute. The "King's messenger" is often found in Egyptian inscriptions (published by J. H. Breasted, *Records*, especially in vol. 2) and almost always in his function of collecting tribute. We learn from these inscriptions that he visited the tributary nations regularly, always accompanied by a numerous retinue and a detachment of Egyptian troops. Most probably it was he and his functionaries who on their travels collected all available information concerning the behavior of the tributary nations and their relations with the enemies of Egypt.

The "King's messenger" is sometimes called "the first charioteer of his majesty," "companion of the feet of the Lord of the Two Lands" (Upper and Lower Egypt), or "King's messenger to every country" (Breasted, *Records*, 3, nos. 592–645). It seems that he was an officer with full powers, a minister plenipotentiary, and we can suppose that the information gathered by him was passed on to the vizir or prime minister. A quite obvious source of intelligence must have been the caravans of merchants travelling from Babylonia to Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, for when Egypt became an empire all the wealth of the Asiatic trade was diverted towards the Nile delta. A further source of information may have been the Phoenician mariners, as the Syrian coastal cities were under Egyptian supremacy, a situation which they did not like. But strong commercial interests helped them swallow their pride, for, as subjects of the Pharaoh, they had easy access to the Nile delta, and their merchandise was welcome on the Egyptian market. Their sea travel, however, began to expand only in the last quarter of the second millennium B.C., so that the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties availed themselves of their services only in limited fashion. By the time their commercial colonies were established in the Mediterranean Sea area the might of Egypt was on the decline, and it was the Assyrians who profited from their experience. In this remote period, the commercial relations of Egypt with Cyprus, Crete, and the other islands of the Aegean Sea were more frequent, and no danger threatened the empire from these quarters. What Pharaoh needed was intelligence from the lands of Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and from Nubia, in the south.

Under these circumstances, it is natural to suppose that Egyptian fortresses on the Palestinian border were particularly important as centers from which to collect intelligence. Special messengers passed through them carrying their royal orders and returned with information for the Pharaoh. Fortunately we possess a fragment from the daybook of a frontier official stationed in a town on the Palestinian border from the reign of Merneptah (1237–1225 B.C.) of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who noted down (alas, too hurriedly) the names and the business of special messengers passing through his post on their way to Syria. The daybook (published in J. H. Breasted, *Records*, vol. 3, nos. 630–635) gives us an interesting glimpse into the dealings between Syria and Egypt in the thirteenth century B.C., and it illustrates in a small way the manner in which the Egyptians obtained information from Syria, as follows:

> 630. VI year 3, first month of the third season [ninth month], fifteenth day: There went up the servant of Baal, Roy, son of Zefer of Gaza, who had with him for Syria two different letters, to wit: [for] the captain of infantry Khay one letter; [for] the chief of Tyre, Baalat-Remeg, one letter.
>
> 631. Year 3, first month of the third season [ninth month], seventeenth day: There arrived the captains of the archers of the Well of Merneptah-Hotephirma, L[ord] P[reserve] H[im], which is [on] the highland, to [report] in the fortress which is in Tharu.
>
> 632. Year 3, first month of the third season [ninth month], [. . .]th day: There returned the attendant, Thutiy, son of T'hekerem of Geket; Methdet, son of Shem-Baal [of] the same [town]; Sutekhmose, son of Eperdegel [of] the same [town], who had with him, for the place where the king was, [for] the captain of infantry Khay, gifts and a letter.

> 633. V. There went up the attendant, Nakhtamon, son of Thara of the Stronghold of Merneptah-Hotephirma, L. P. H., who journeyed [to] [Upper] Tyre, who had with him for Syria two different letters, to wit: [for] the captain of infantry Penamon, one letter; [for] the steward Ramsesnakht, of this town, one letter.
>
> 634. There returned the chief of the stable Pemerkhetem, son of Ani, of the town of Merneptah-Hotephirma, which is in the district of the Aram, who had with him [for] the place where the king was, two letters, to wit: [for] the captain of infantry Peremhab, one letter; for the deputy Peremhab, one letter.
>
> 635. Year 3, first month of the third season [ninth month], twenty-fifth day: There went up the charioteer Enwau, of the great stable of the court of Binre-Meriamon [Merneptah], L. P. H. [follows a list of fifteen names].

It is remarkable to observe the great care with which the frontier official verified everyone passing through his post. His vigilance might have been sharpened by the fact that King Merneptah was at the same time in Syria, on a campaign which led, among other things, to the plundering of Israel. We learn this from an inscription celebrating his victory in Syria and Palestine. Thus, both a good and reliable intelligence service was necessary, and this may explain why so many messengers travelled from Egypt to Palestine and back.

A further letter written by a frontier official contains a report to his superior concerning an Edomite Bedouin tribe to which he gave permission, probably according to a previous order, to pass through the fortress where he was stationed, and to pasture their cattle on Egyptian soil. This is not an isolated case, but, at the same time, it explains the efforts made by the Egyptians to be on good terms with the wandering Bedouins, from whom useful information might be gleaned.

In the same inscription, which celebrates Merneptah's victory in Palestine, is found an interesting reference to messengers. In describing the general rejoicing in Egypt at the news of the successful pacification of Syria and Palestine, the scribe writes (Breasted, *Records*, 2, no. 616), "The messengers [skirt] the battlement of the walls, shaded from the sun, until their watchman wakes." The singling out of the messengers for special mention is significant. These men, entrusted with the carrying of royal orders to the officials and of returning with information and intelligence from them, constituted a very important class of royal official, and were thus worthy of mention in a commemorative monument. That general joy and a feeling of security were felt in Egypt after the victory is illustrated by the fact that the official messengers, who were bound to be admitted at once because of the importance of their business, were leisurely waiting under the shadow of the ramparts for the watchmen, usually so alert, to awaken from their siesta.

Again we have a little information as to the manner in which intelligence was gathered and relayed to the Pharaoh. The geographical position of Egypt, the immense distances from the south and from Nubia to the capital, and from there to Asia, indicate that there must have been a well-organized service for the sending of important messengers to the palace as rapidly as possible. Messengers "going north, or pressing southward to the court" are mentioned in the tale of Sinuhe, written, most probably, under Sesostris I (1971–1928 B.C.) of the Twelfth Dynasty (Breasted, *Records*, 1, nos. 490–497), before Egypt had become a mighty empire. And Sinuhe who, after his flight from Egypt, found refuge with a sheik of Upper Palestine, where he grew rich and powerful, points out with marked pride in the tale that all messengers "turned in to him." This would seem to indicate that the royal agents followed a regular route and found lodging at a kind of "station" among people whose loyalty to the Pharaoh could be relied upon.

We quote a few interesting incidents which show that intelligence concerning revolutions, or brooding unrest, in time reached Thebes, the capital. Most of these incidents concern Nubia, the southern part of the Egyptian Empire. At the same time, we learn from the documents relating them, incidental details of how the information was gathered, and who were the agents and transmitters. For instance, in an Assuan inscription dating from the reign of Thutmose II of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Breasted, *Records*, 2, no. 121)

> One came to inform his majesty as follows: The wretched Kush has begun to rebel, those who were under the dominion of the Lord of the Two Lands purpose hostility, beginning to smite him. The inhabitants of Egypt [Egyptian settlers in Nubia] are about to bring away the cattle behind this fortress which their father built in his campaigns . . . in order to repulse the rebellious barbarians. . . . [When this intelligence reached Thebes, the Pharaoh's residence,] his majesty was furious thereat, like a panther. . . .

A campaign was ordered and the rebellion was crushed. We gather from the text that the information was dispatched from a frontier fortress.

A like incident took place under Thutmose IV of the same dynasty. The king was at his Theban residence, and about to offer sacrifice to the god Amon "his father," when (Breasted, *Records*, 2, nos. 826 ff.) "one came to say to his majesty: the Negro descends from above Wawat, he hath planned revolt against Egypt. He gathers to himself all the barbarians and the rebels of other countries." The king, undisturbed, performed the sacrifice, and only when his god had granted him a favorable oracle did he proceed with the organization of an expedition which ended in the overthrow of the rebels.

Amenophis III's intelligence service in Nubia was more efficient. His agents discovered the rebels' plot before it was hatched, as we learn from a stele erected in commemoration of this event at the first cataract of the Nile (Breasted, *Records*, 2, no. 844).

> One came to tell his majesty: the foe of Kush the wretched [has planned] rebellion in his heart.

But because the plot had been discovered before it ripened into action, the rebels were quickly subdued.

> His majesty led on unto his victory, he completed it on his first campaign. . . . Like "a fierce-eyed lion" he seized Kush. [All] the chiefs were overthrown in their valleys, cast down in their blood, one upon another. . . .

A similar success on the part of the Egyptian intelligence service in Asia is reported under the Pharaoh Amenhotep II, of the same Dynasty (Breasted, *Records*, 2, no. 787):

> Behold, his majesty heard, saying that some of those Asiatics who were in the city of Ikathi had [plotted] to make a plan for casting out the infantry of his majesty [who were] in the city, in order to overturn ——— who were loyal to his majesty.

This time it is evident that the intelligence came from Egyptian secret agents recruited from among the native population—the inscription discloses that there were natives "who were loyal to his majesty." The agents were in touch with the commander of the Egyptian garrison, and it was the commandant who dispatched the intelligence to Thebes.

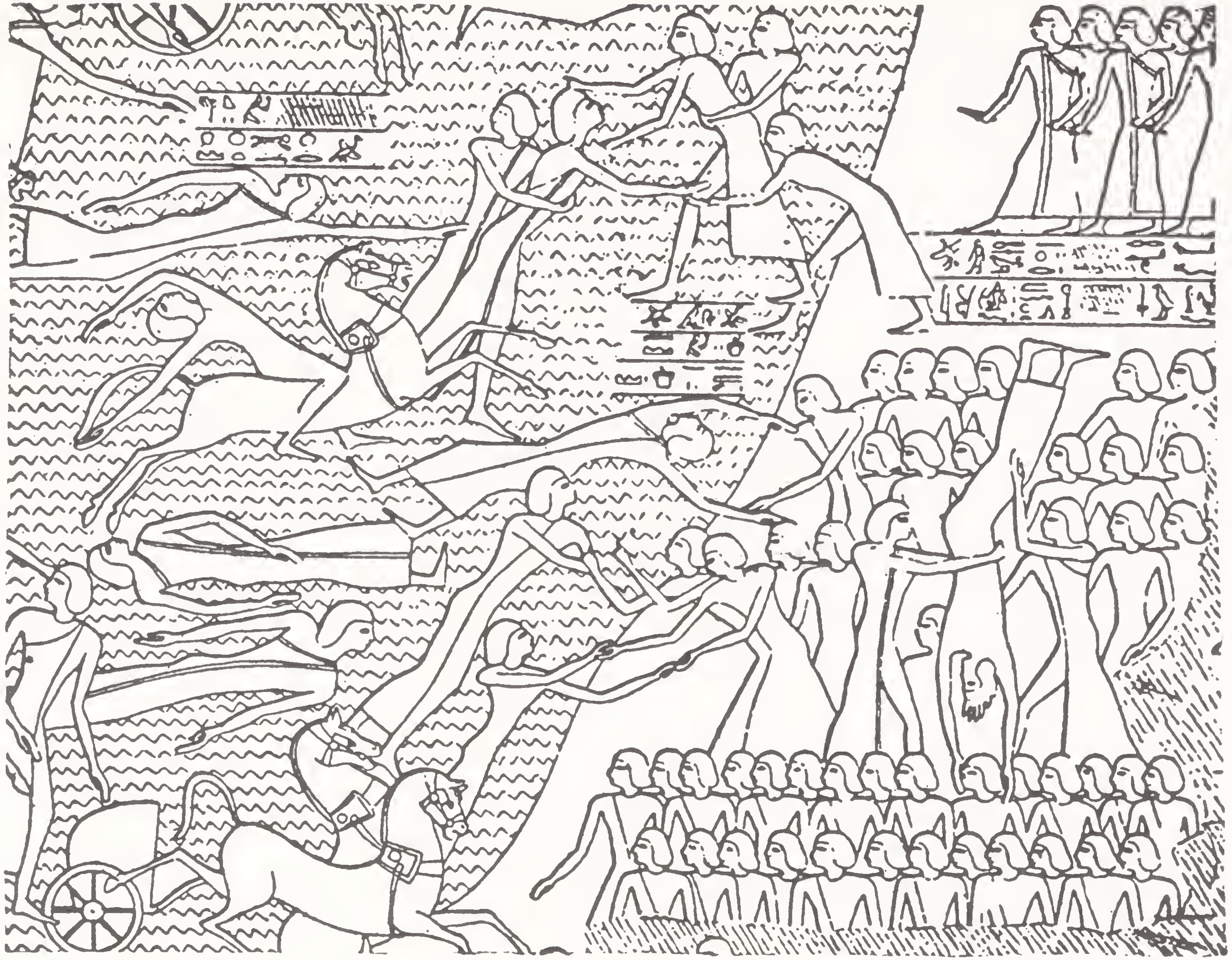
Thus we can say with confidence that it was predominantly an effective intelligence service which helped the great Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty in building the first great empire in human history and in guarding it against all danger. The last great king of this dynasty was Amenhotep III (ca. 1417–1379 B.C.), and from the last years of his reign and from that of his successor Amenhotep IV (better known under his new name Ikhnaton or Akhenaten, adopted in honor of his new supreme and only god Aton), we possess a very important collection of diplomatic correspondence with the princes of Egyptian Asiatic possessions. These documents—the oldest diplomatic correspondence in human history—are known as the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, or letters, after the place where they were discovered (translated by S. A. B. Mercer). These letters present a very fitting, nay, glaring, illustration of oriental shrewdness and double-dealing. But a new conqueror had arisen in Asia Minor, the Hittites, whose center was in Cappadocia. These were a non-Semitic people of uncertain racial affinities, and their hunger for expansion was not sated by the acquisition of the lands of Asia Minor, for they aimed to conquer Syria and Palestine as well as the Phoenician coastal cities. The Hittite intelligence service soon proved to be both active and effective, and they captured several Egyptian vassals, among them Aziru of Amor, who were working for them and against Egypt's faithful adherents. Rib-Addi, a loyal Egyptian vassal from Byblos, was constantly pointing out the danger and begging for support. Unfortunately, Amenhotep III neglected the affairs of state towards the end of his life, and Ikhnaton was much too preoccupied with his religious and social reforms. These were far-reaching, it is true, and he deserves a special place in the history of human spirituality. His main endeavor was the establishment of a monotheistic religion, and he was the first ruler to preach human individualism; unhappily, his ideas were not understood and his reforms scarcely survived him. In foreign affairs he proved extremely inexperienced, and, as is often the case with the idealist in politics, he took the lies of Aziru for the truth. As we read this correspondence, we cannot help but receive the impression that those last remarkable rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, in particular Ikhnaton, hopelessly underestimated the importance of a reliable intelligence service. However, the situation was not too bad in spite of enormous diplomatic and military pressure from the Hittites. Rib-Addi became an almost tragic figure, being unable to convince the Egyptian court of his own loyalty, while at the same time endeavoring to prove the disloyalty and treachery of his opponents. The Pharaohs still had residents in many Syrian and Palestinian cities, and the Egyptian garrisons, although weakened, were still stationed in the fortresses. How, then, did it happen that Egyptian power in Asia broke down so miserably under Ikhnaton and his weak, short-lived successor? The only answer to this question is that the Egyptian court allowed the fine intelligence service established by their great conquerors to collapse pitiably. Even a quick reading of the Tell-el-Amarna letters convinces us of that.

Egypt's power began to rise again under Seti I (ca. 1319–1304), the second Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty. An inscription from the Karnak reliefs, dated in his reign, speaks of his expedition against the Bedouins and Palestine. The opening words show us clearly that before commencing the attack, Seti I had re-established a reliable intelligence service on the Egyptian borders and beyond (Breasted, *Records*, 3, no. 101).

> One came to say to his majesty: the vanquished Shasu [Bedouin Kabiri], they plan rebellion. Their tribal chiefs are gathered together, rising against the Asiatics of Kharu. They have taken to cursing, and quarreling, each of them slaying his neighbor, and they disregard the laws of the palace.

These words depict very fittingly the confusion which reigned in Palestine, where all authority had been overthrown with the collapse of Egyptian power, and the Pharaoh took advantage of the situation to regain a solid footing in Palestine. But most of Syria was lost to the Hittites, and all that Seti I could do to check their expansion was to conclude a peace treaty with them.

The task of fighting the Hittites devolved upon Ramesses II, who organized three campaigns against them. He extended his dominion during the first campaign as far as Beyrut, but it is the second campaign which interests us from the standpoint of our investigation. We are in possession of a poem praising the valor displayed by the young Pharaoh during the memorable battle of Kadesh, and of an official report on the campaign (Breasted, *Records*, 3, nos. 294–391). We learn from these documents a few interesting details about both Hittite and Egyptian military intelligence, the former proving superior in this field, also. They succeeded in concealing their movements so well that Egyptian military intelligence was unable to discover the slightest trace of the enemy. The Egyptian officers concluded that the Hittite army was still in the far north, instead of which the entire Hittite force was deftly concealed near Kadesh on the Orontes river. The Hittite king sent two Bedouins, posing as deserters, to the Pharaoh's camp; the two agents played their role so successfully that Ramesses II readily believed their story and pushed forward with but one division to invest Kadesh, his three



Scene from the reliefs of the Battle of Kadesh (J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*).

remaining divisions straggling slowly behind. Fortunately, while bivouacking before Kadesh, Egyptian scouts captured two Hittite spies who, after a merciless beating, which is duly pictured in the reliefs commemorating the battle, confessed that the whole Hittite army was concealed behind the city of Kadesh. This permitted the Pharaoh to dispatch a message to his third division ordering it to hurry to the royal camp. But, while he was reprimanding his military intelligence for their fatal lack of efficiency, the Hittites, with their war chariots, cut through the marching echelons of the second division and attacked the camp of the Pharaoh. Ramesses II was surrounded by the enemy. Thanks only to his personal courage, he escaped the encirclement, rallied his own bodyguard and saved the situation at the most critical moment.

After continuous fighting, Ramesses II succeeded in subduing Palestine, in crushing the revolts incited by Hittite diplomacy, and in penetrating as far as northern Syria. A treaty signed in 1283 B.C. concluded the seemingly endless rivalry of the two powers in Asia Minor. After these experiences, Ramesses II insisted on a smoothly functioning Egyptian intelligence service, and his successor Merneptah (1237–1225 B.C.) did likewise. We possess two documents dating from the reign of the latter, namely, the great Karnak inscription and the Cairo column (Breasted, *Records*, 3, nos. 579, 595), which relate the crushing of a revolt of the Libyans and their allies who had invaded Egypt. The inscription on the Cairo column gives us the exact date the Pharaoh received intelligence concerning the Libyan threat:

> Year 5, second month of the third season (tenth month). One came to say to his majesty: "The wretched [chief] of Libya has invaded [with]. . . ."

This is confirmed also by the Karnak inscription, where the first date, the fifth year of the Pharaoh's reign, is deleted. As we have seen, the daybook of a frontier official, giving us glimpses into the relations between Syria and Egypt, dates also from the reign of Merneptah. All this shows us that the founders of the second Egyptian Empire stressed the need of a good, reliable intelligence service for the protection of Egyptian interests in Africa and Asia.

For a highly absolutist monarchy as was ancient Egypt, it would seem necessary to maintain, besides an intelligence service abroad, a body of secret police to keep a sharp eye on his majesty's own subjects and to test their loyalty. It appears, however, that there was no such elaborate organization, although there was present at court a high official known as "the eyes and the ears of the King" whose business it was to make confidential enquiries. The loyalty of the Pharaoh's subjects seems to have been secured firmly, by religious bonds, since he was believed to be the very son of the supreme god, the Sun-God. He was not only the master, but the owner of all lands, the only source of justice, the only distributor of offices and social positions. He was god, the appointed intermediary between his subjects and heaven. Who would have dared to disobey him? The numerous and privileged class of priests saw to its own interest in inculcating strongly in the minds of simple people the divine character of the son of Sun. In a strongly religious-minded society as was the Egyptian, these religious reasons were the most secure guarantees of the loyalty of the Pharaoh's subjects.

A kind of strict control over the functionaries, mayors, and local authorities was exercised by the vizir, the Pharaoh's prime minister, a function once occupied by Joseph, Jacob's son. We possess some descriptions of the duties of the vizirs, found in their tombs. It is interesting to read that the duty most forcibly stressed is that of being a good and just judge. But one paragraph, dealing with the duties and treatment of the vizir's messengers (Breasted, *Records*, 2, no. 681), seems to insinuate that control over the loyal execution of the duties of the officials was very strictly held by the vizir. His messengers were in some ways his secret agents, whose arrival at the office of the vizir's subordinates must have filled many of them with terror. These inspections, together with the function of the official called "the eyes and ears of the King," could thus be regarded as a primitive form of the institution of a special secret police.

Babylonia emerged to compete for a universal empire much later, when the Assyrians had become masters of Mesopotamia. Tiglath-pileser I (1116–1078), one of their greatest conquerors, extended his sovereignty north as far as Armenia, and west as far as Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, the stronghold of Hittite power. Lebanon became his hunting ground, and Egypt sent him a crocodile as an acknowledgment of his important political power. Assurnasirapli II (884–860 B.C.) opened a further chapter in Assyria's victorious drive, which was continued by Shalmaneser III (859–825), victor over the Syrian confederacy and over Achab of Israel, and it was brought to a triumphant finish under Tiglath-pileser III (745-728) who broke the power of the Hittites in Asia Minor and secured for Assyria the great commercial roads to the Mediterranean, and especially to the Phoenician seaports on the Syrian coast. The conquest of Egypt in 670 B.C.

under Esarhaddon served as a crowning achievement to those previous triumphs.

The Babylonians and Assyrians had the great advantage of learning many things concerning the administration of the state and the building of an empire from the Egyptians. They had, of course, their own culture and their own ideas of kingship. There were periods in old Babylonian history when their kings had pretended to be of divine origin—such kings as Ur-Nina, Gudea, Naram-Sin, the kings of the Dynasties of Ur, Isin, and Larsa; but the practical divinization of kings seems to have vanished during the rule of the dynasty founded by the famous Babylonian legislator Hammurapi. From then on Babylonian and Assyrian rulers boasted only of their divine appointment to rule over their subjects.

It is difficult to say whether the Babylonian rulers who had assumed names of divinities acted under Egyptian influence, or whether this period of "divine kingship" was the natural development of native traditions. However, when Egypt began to play the role of conqueror, the Babylonian kings soon came into direct contact with the divine rulers of Egypt. It was this contact which gave them their first valuable lesson in diplomacy and intelligence, so clearly revealed to us in the Tell-el-Amarna letters. Letters sent by the Babylonian rulers to their "brother," the Pharaoh, contain very little of a political nature, but we may imagine that the royal caravans, bringing letters and presents to the Pharaoh's residence, opened the way to lively intercourse in many other respects. It was by these means that the Babylonian kings secured information as to the political climate in Egypt, the habits of the Pharaohs, of the chief courtiers, and of the sentiments of the many peoples in Syria and Palestine.

Besides this, the Babylonian kings kept up an active diplomatic intercourse with the petty kings and princes under Egyptian supremacy, and also with the kings of Asia Minor. Some of this correspondence has survived and was discovered in Boghazköi. In particular, we learn from it the role played by the Babylonians in the great struggle of Ramesses II with the Hittites, and for Egyptian supremacy over Syria.

The experiences of the Babylonians were naturally shared by their racial brothers, the Assyrians, and it was the latter who built up, on this basis, a whole system of rapid intelligence services. Again, it became evident to them that the defense and security of their empire depended upon both good communications and reliable information. In this respect, the Assyrians were the predecessors of the Romans, for the importance which they gave to the existence of good communications is illustrated by the fact that their roads were placed under the protection of a special divinity, namely, the god of the roads. Good communications were already one of the first preoccupations of the Babylonian kings, and we learn from an inscription that Hammurapi's messengers rode the long distance from Larsa to Babylon in two days, travelling, of course, both day and night. The first great Assyrian conqueror, Tiglath-pileser, considered the provision of good roads for his troops and messengers as the first condition of success. We find several allusions to the construction of roads during the time of his empire-building, and we also learn details of the organization in providing safe travel on these roads. In an Assyrian magic text, we read that there were signs placed, on especially important roads, directing the traveller in order to make it possible for him to continue his journey even at night. At certain distances royal guards were placed for the protection of travellers, as well as to assure rapid transmission of urgent messages. Particular care was given to routes through the desert. Fortresses were built to protect them and wells were dug to make travelling possible. Assyrian engineers were also good bridge builders, knowing not only how to construct pontoon bridges, but also bridges of hewn stone, held together with iron and lead. The Greek historian Herodotus (born 484 B.C.) had admired a bridge in Babylon, the remains of which still exist (Herodotus, *History*, Bk. I, 186).

The main communication routes naturally followed the great rivers and ended at the Persian Gulf whence Assyrian boats could sail to India, Arabia, and Egypt. There was easy access from Assyria to Armenia from the Tigris to Lake Van. Communications with Asia Minor were more difficult, but there the Assyrians were able to use the roads which had been constructed by the Hittites. So it came about that, when in 708 B.C. Sargon II had ended his conquests in Asia Minor and had put the finishing touches to his organization of this area, the Assyrians, due especially to their diplomatic rapport with the new kingdom of Lydia, came into contact with the Greek cities on the Asiatic coast. In this way, the Greek genius, which was at that time initiating the great rise of Hellenic civilization, came to know the great achievements of Mesopotamian civilization.

Along the main roads a special royal post service was organized in order to secure rapid intelligence from all points of the Assyrian Empire. The royal messengers held a particular place at court among the minor officials, and were called *mâr shipri sha sharri*. In all the chief cities special officials "for the expedition of royal letters" were stationed to watch over the rapid dispatch of mail. The central office in the capital of Nineveh must have exercised strict control and kept both officials and messengers busy. Complaints concerning laziness or carelessness on the part of officials were strictly examined, as we can see from reading the *Letters* published by R. F. Harper.

This organization must have been begun before the rise of Assyria, for we read in the Babylonian archives, found in Boghazköi, complaints about attacks by Bedouins on royal couriers, and of the closing of Assyria to Babylonian messengers. Moreover, as we shall see, the Persian name for the royal messengers, which is *angaros*, seems to be of Babylonian origin.

Organization of the royal post must have been planned with great care, and experiences learned from military expeditions were used for this purpose. This explains why the royal scribes accompanying the troops have often noted down so meticulously the distances between the important points through which the troops had passed, and the time taken by the army to traverse them. This is particularly characteristic of the reign of Esarhaddon, the conqueror of Egypt, and that of Assurbanapal, when new roads were needed to link up the newly conquered countries with the eastern part of the empire. For example, Esarhaddon's expedition against Bâzu is recorded in the following way:

> Bâzu, a district located afar off, a desert stretch of alkali, a thirsty region: 140 *bêru* ["double hours," Assyrian mileage] of sand, thorn-brush and "gazelle-mouth" stones, 20 *bêru* [through] Mount Hazû, a mountain of *saggilmut*—stone—[these stretches] I left behind me as I advanced [thither, *i.e.* to Bazû] where, since earliest days, no king before me had come.

So we read in the *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, published by D. D. Luckenbill (II, no. 537).

Accurate descriptions of the road to Egypt and through Egypt to Ethiopia were left in an inscription which is, unfortunately, only fragmentarily preserved. But the numbers of *bêru*, the Assyrian mileage measure, can still be read (*As. Records*, II, nos. 106, 557–559). Additional indications are given by Assurbanapal's scribes (*As. Records*, II, no. 901). The Assyrian communication system seems to have been completed in Assurbanapal's time and the measurements between the different stations definitely fixed. The king's scribes acquired the habit of indicating the progress of royal armies against rebels and the distances by which the Assyrians had pursued the fleeing armies in the Assyrian mileage, or *bêru* (*As. Records*, II, nos. 823–825; 881, 895, 941; Sargon, *ibid.*, nine Records). It seems also that the new road organization to Egypt and Ethiopia functioned well under Assurbanapal. We learned this from an interesting text announcing how the revolt of the Ethiopian king, who had penetrated as far as Memphis, had been crushed (*As. Records*, II, no. 900).

An army was dispatched to Egypt and the Abyssinian forces were cut to pieces. And, again, says the king, with great satisfaction, "A messenger told me the good news [in the place] whither [I had returned]" (*As. Records*, II, no. 901).

It seems that important intelligence such as news of plots and revolutions in distant provinces was transmitted to the capital by means of fire signals. Again, we are not well informed about this method of transmitting intelligence. There is, however, in the inscription describing Assurbanapal's boyhood and period as crown prince, a description of celebrations organized to commemorate the installation of Shamash-shum-ukin as king of Babylonia. At the same time, the statue of the god Marduk was brought back to Babylon. The inscription says among other things (*As. Records*, II, no. 989): "From the quay of Assur to the quay of Babylon where they were taking him [*i.e.* the god Marduk], lambs were slaughtered, bulls sacrificed, sweet smelling [herbs] scattered about, . . . all that one could mention was brought to the morning and evening meal. . . . Beechwood was kindled, torches lighted. Every *bêru* ['double-hour's journey'], a beacon was set up. All of my troops kept going around it, like a rainbow, making music day and night."

It seems that the beacons erected at fixed distances of a "double-hour's journey"—the Assyrian mileage—were not a special invention for that occasion. It appears that the king gave orders to kindle for that special occasion the signal beacons erected at given distances on the roads used by royal messengers; this was suggested by C. Fries in his monograph. When there was an urgent communication, and the most rapid transmission necessary, the beacons were lit, thus announcing the important news. Simultaneously, a fast courier was dispatched to give more details of the information announced by fire post. Since his arrival was already awaited at the "stations," he was able to travel fast without hindrance.

Another Assyrian document confirms this deduction. It belongs to the numerous magic texts quoted by C. Fries (p. 117) and was originally kept in the library of Assurbanapal. The man who wants to defend himself against the malevolence of a witch apostrophizes his enemy thus, "Well, my witch, who art kindling fire every 'two-hours' journey' and who art sending out thy messenger every 'four-hours' journey,' I know thee and I will post watchmen in order to protect myself."

There is an evident allusion in this text to the Assyrian postal service, and we can conclude from it that the fire beacons were kindled at a distance of one *bêru* (= two hours' journey), and that at a distance of two *bêru* (= four hours' journey, according to Assyrian mileage) were stations where messengers were changed.

These magic incantations are important also for a further reason. In another text from the same group, the man who is defending himself against the magic art of the witch stresses the quasi-omnipresence of the sorceress, and of her magic art. "She is at home in all lands, she passes over all mountains, she walks in the streets, she enters the houses, she infiltrates the fortresses, she is present in all market places. Her quick feet are admired and dreaded."

We are entitled to see in this text an expression of the admiration felt by the average Assyrian for this royal institution which made the king almost omnipresent. But, also, perhaps, there is in those words an expression of fear and dread of the royal messengers —his secret agents—who were to be found everywhere, and from whose interference no one was immune. They were the eyes and ears of the king and reported to him all that they learned on their travels. There is here an indirect indication that the Assyrian kings, and perhaps also their Babylonian predecessors, already had not only a well-organized intelligence service in the provinces and abroad, but also a type of secret police using the same means of communication, who were dreaded by the subjects of the divinely-appointed sovereign.

How did the Assyrian intelligence service function, and by what means did the kings obtain the necessary information of political and military value which they needed? Here again, we must be content with casual indications which give us some general ideas on this point.

The documents to which we would naturally turn for evidence are the Annals of the Babylonian and Assyrian kings, preserved in their commemorative monuments, published by D. D. Luckenbill, and quoted in *As. Records*. Unfortunately, in this kind of Assyrian literature there can only be found a few precise sentences which bear on our subject. The inscriptions abound in exalted titles which, incidentally, reveal the principal ideas concerning the divinely appointed Assyrian monarchy.

All this is very impressive and might have been good propaganda for the Assyrian monarchical concept. The kings tell their subjects in a very polished style and in flowery phrases how "in the fury of their valor they marched against their enemies." All these marches and victories presuppose good intelligence, but seldom do the kings reveal to us that there was an intelligence service and that it worked perfectly.

Assurnasirapli gives us such an example: "While I was staying in the land of Kutmuhi, they brought me the word: The city of Sûru of Bît-Halupê has revolted, they have slain Hamatai, their governor, and Ahiababa, the son of a nobody . . . they have set up as king over them." This is a good example of an effective intelligence service, as the king was away on an expedition and far from his residence, but received the report in time (*As. Records*, I, no. 443).

Shalmaneser III gives another example (*As. Records*, I, no. 585): "In the twenty-eighth year of my reign, while I was staying in Calah, word was brought me that the people of Hattina had slain Lubarna their lord, and had raised Surri; who was not of royal blood, to the kingship over them. . . ." Sargon II, in the second and third year of his reign, received in time information of an uprising in Syria, and crushed it (*As. Records*, II, nos. 5, 6). In the seventh year, his agents in Armenia had discovered a plot (*As. Records*, II, no. 12). Similar incidents are reported in other inscriptions (*As. Records*, II, no. 60). Azuri (*As. Records*, II, no. 62), king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to bring his tribute and started plotting to that effect. But Sargon's agents got wind of it before the plot matured. Azuri was replaced by his brother, who might have informed the royal agents in time of what was going on. Esarhaddon learned about the treachery of the king of Sidon (*As. Records*, II, no. 511) and "caught him like a fish in the sea."

There is among Assurbanapal's inscriptions one which makes an indirect allusion to how Assyrian agents were working on the frontier in order to obtain information about those lands not yet subject to Assyria. Unfortunately, the inscription is not well preserved, but, nevertheless, does illustrate the activity of Assyrian agents (*As. Records*, II, no. 893).

In one Assyrian letter published by R. F. Harper (no. 444) one reads a report on spies in Armenia: "With reference to what the king wrote saying, 'Send out spies,' I have sent them out twice; some came back and made reports detailed in the letter to the effect that five enemy lieutenants have entered Uesi in Armenia, together with commanders of camel-corps; they are bringing up their forces which are of some strength."

Other officials reported on the movements of caravans and on what the merchants were bringing with them (Harper, no. 781). Another letter reports that sympathizers were willing to give useful information (Harper, no. 296). Naturally, deserters were found to be very useful (Harper, no. 434), and King Esarhaddon sent special instructions to his agents on the frontier asking for a written statement of "the tale they [the deserters] have to tell" (Harper, no. 434).

The Assyrian intelligence service was especially active in Armenia, and we can deduce from reports sent to King Sargon that Assyrian agents were informed about every movement made by the king of that country (Harper, nos. 381, 444, 492). Among other movements, they reported that the king of Armenia was rewarding deserters from Assyria with fields and plantations (Harper, no. 252). Most instructive are the reports sent to Nineveh on the great defeat suffered by the Armenians at the hands of the Cimmerians, a mysterious people, most probably of Iranian origin who, pressed by the Scythians, left what is today southern Russia and penetrated into Asia Minor. The crown prince who sent this news to his father Sargon assured him that this information was absolutely reliable, as it was confirmed by three different and independent sources of Assyrian intelligence. Details are given which show that these sources must have been well informed. At the same time, the commanders of the fortresses on the frontier who had their own agents were sending similar news. This detail illustrates most clearly how well organized the Assyrian intelligence service was, and how effectively it worked.

This service was able also to obtain information in time about enemy agents on Assyrian territory. Among this correspondence is a letter from a messenger reporting to Assurbanapal that the Elamites were trying to secure information from certain persons by promises of free pasture in the meadow (Harper, no. 282). In another letter sent by his agent, Assurbanapal is warned not to admit to his presence certain persons whom the writer suspects of being a kind of Fifth Column for the Elamites (Harper, nos. 277, 736). Every sign of unwillingness on the part of the subjected nations to obey the king's orders is reported by Assurbanapal's agents (Harper, nos. 774, 1263). The agents studied carefully all that was said in the streets of the occupied cities, and dutifully reported to the court any details of anti-Assyrian propaganda (Harper, nos. 1114, 1204). On one occasion Assurbanapal deemed it necessary to warn the Babylonians against such propaganda in a special proclamation (Harper, no. 301). Threats and flatteries are used in order to immunize the disgruntled population in the subjected territories against such propaganda.

We find in this correspondence some indication that a kind of secret service was constantly supervising the loyalty and efficiency of the royal officials. Any kind of suspicious conduct merited the attention of certain agents and was immediately reported to the court. Special messengers were then dispatched with the order to investigate. Moreover, the high officials in the provinces were under strict orders to report to the king at certain intervals (Harper, nos. 88, 283).

If we make a résumé of all we have said on Assyrian intelligence, we see that the Assyrians made considerable progress in this respect. They elaborated on the whole system of intelligence abroad and in occupied territories, and perfected the means of rapid transmission of important intelligence to the capital. On the effectiveness of this intelligence depended the existence and security of the empire. They were absolutely merciless in waging their wars and in suppressing any kind of revolution, and were therefore unable to count on the loyalty of their subjects because of this very ruthlessness. Thus their intelligence service was constantly watchful and on the alert. Also, we see in Assyria a development in the organization of a kind of secret service watching over the loyalty of royal officials. We have only a few details about this, but it certainly existed, and from that time on was a special feature of almost all Asiatic absolute monarchies.

One further point should be mentioned although it touches our subject only indirectly. The Assyrians invented another ruthless method, imitated by other Asiatic régimes as well as by Rome and Byzantium. In order to minimize the danger of revolutions, the Assyrians transplanted tens of thousands of the population to other districts. These forced migrations were cruel and inhuman, but a secure means of crushing revolutions and of securing the frontiers of the Empire.

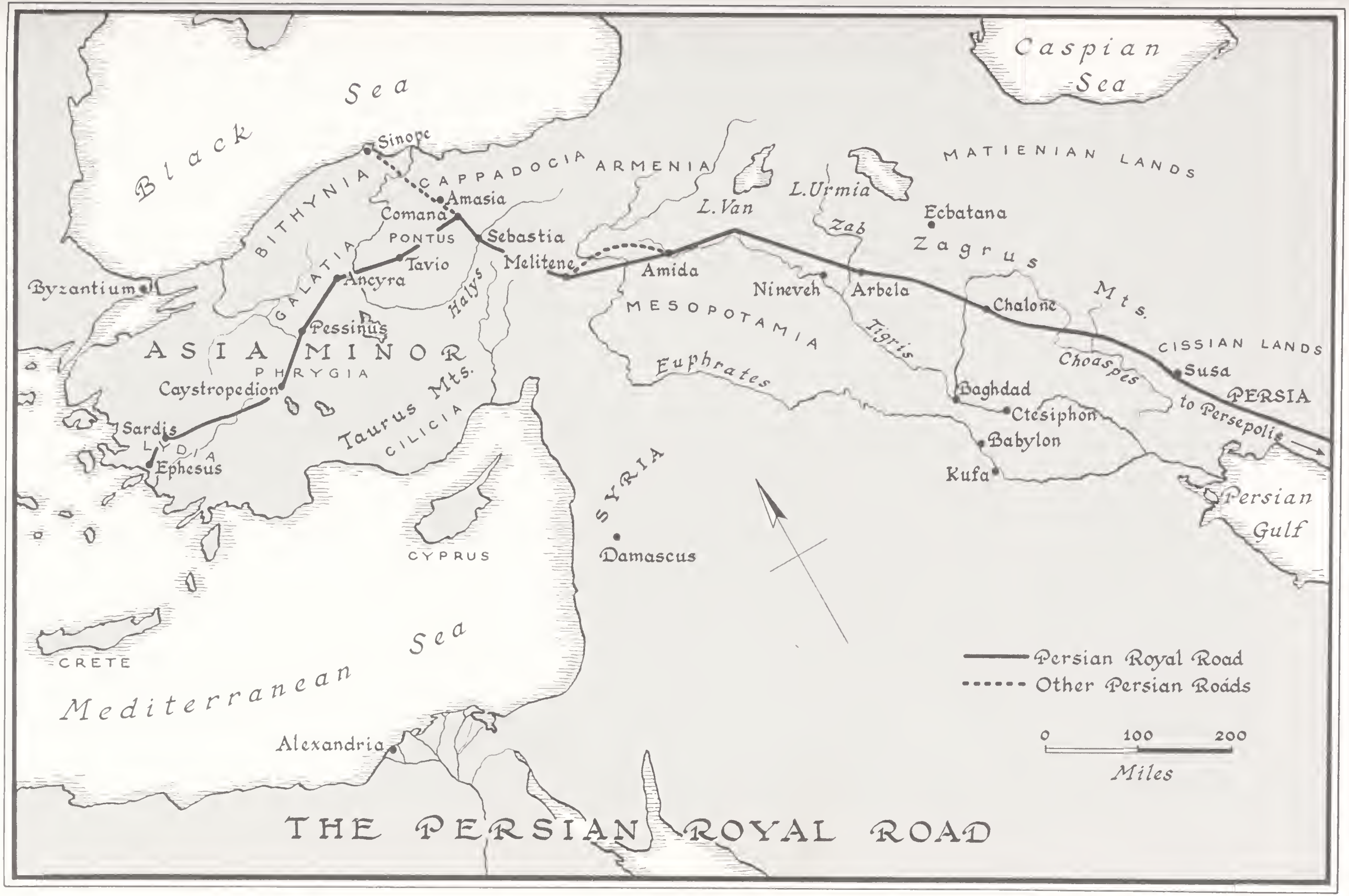
The heirs of the old Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Hittites were the Persians. Their powerful state was built on the ruins of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians began to penetrate into Iran in 836 B.C. They succeeded, however, in subjugating only the Medes, akin to the Persian tribes. The Medes started building their own state in the latter half of the seventh century B.C. (about 640 B.C.) when Assyria began to decline. But in 553 B.C. the Persians, under Cyrus, revolted against the Medes and founded the Persian Empire of the Achaemenids. Cyrus's success was like lightning. In 546 B.C. he turned against the anti-Persian coalition formed by Babylonia, Egypt, Croesus of Lydia, and the Spartans. He first defeated Croesus of Lydia, captured his capital Sardis, and soon became master of Asia Minor, Armenia, and the Greek littoral cities. In 539 B.C. Babylon fell, then the rest of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. Cyrus's successor Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 B.C.; Cyprus and the Greek islands near the Asiatic coast were forced to accept Persian supremacy, all these conquests having been consolidated by Darius and his generals. Darius (521–486 B.C.) added the Indus valley and Kashmir, pushed as far as the Caucasus, and exerted an important civilizing influence by encouraging exploration in navigation, and by building canals and roads to assure secure ways for commerce.

Such an immense empire could be effectively administered only if the central government in Persia was constantly in touch with the remotest provinces, promptly informed on all happenings among the populations, and warned of all dangers coming from outside the borders. All this required a good intelligence service; this was clear to the first three great Persian kings.

All three Achaemenids showed great administrative ability, and gave proof of considerable understanding of the national feeling of subjected nations. Their representatives were freely admitted to high offices, but the executive power always remained in the hands of the Persians. Darius I completed the organization of the empire, dividing it into twenty great provinces, called satrapies: the whole administration of these provinces was in the hands of governors, or satraps, aided by a council composed of Persian colonists, although natives were admitted freely to the satraps' households. The military character of the Persian Empire was reflected in the fact that the head of the court and of the imperial administration was the supreme commander of the "Immortals," the royal bodyguard of ten thousand superior troops, and that the troops stationed in the provinces owed allegiance not to the satrap, but to the king alone.

The position of the satraps was very important, and this importance, combined with the sentiments of independence felt by some of the governors, spelled danger. In order to offset this danger and to keep the whole empire, with its satraps and numerous officials, under constant control, the founders of the Persian Empire created an important office designed to oversee the whole administration. The head of this office was named the "Eye of the King" to whose control were subjected all satraps and all royal functionaries—the regular running of this office depending on a good intelligence service.

The effectiveness of this service was naturally contingent on rapid means of communication between the remotest provinces and


Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Sinope
BITHYNIA
CAPPADOCIA
ARMENIA
MATIENIAN LANDS
L. Urmia
L. Van
Ecbatana
Zab
Zagrus Mts.
Amasia
Comana
Sebastia
PONTUS
Tavio
Melitene
Amida
Nineveh
Arbela
Chalone
Byzantium
GALATIA
Ancyra
Halys
MESOPOTAMIA
Tigris
CISSIAN LANDS
Susa
PERSIA
to Persepolis
Choaspes
Pessinus
ASIA MINOR
PHRYGIA
Taurus Mts.
CILICIA
Caystropedion
Euphrates
Baghdad
Ctesiphon
Babylon
Kufa
Sardis
LYDIA
Ephesus
SYRIA
Damascus
Persian Gulf
CYPRUS
CRETE
Mediterranean Sea
Alexandria
Persian Royal Road
Other Persian Roads
0
100
200
Miles
THE PERSIAN ROYAL ROAD

the capital. The latter was transferred from Persis and Persepolis to Susa, in the tract of the lower Tigris and Euphrates, which was the natural center of the Empire. In order to assure good communications with this center, a whole system of royal roads was built and a kind of royal post created, with fixed remount stations for the royal messengers travelling from Susa to the provinces and back, carrying their royal orders, reports from the satraps, and confidential intelligence on the officials or on the behavior of hostile and subjected tribes.

We are fortunate in possessing genuine information that Cyrus himself appreciated good intelligence, as to how the machinery of the "Eye of the King" functioned, and how the imperial post was organized. This is given to us by Xenophon, the Greek writer of the fifth century B.C. (born about 430 B.C., died after 355 B.C.), who was a great admirer of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, and of the effectiveness of the Persian monarchic system. His work *Cyropaedia* is a political and philosophical manual and a kind of panegyric on Cyrus. When describing the type of administration introduced by Cyrus, Xenophon discloses how much Cyrus valued the importance of intelligence, and how he encouraged men to bring him the information he needed.

When explaining why Cyrus was said to possess many eyes and many ears, Xenophon tells us (*Cyropaedia*, VIII, 2.10 ff.):

> We have discovered that he acquired the so-called "King's eyes" and "King's ears" in no other way than by bestowing presents and honors; for by rewarding liberally those who reported to him whatever it was to his interest to hear, he prompted many men to make it their business to use their eyes and ears to spy out what they could report to the King to his advantage. As a natural result of this, many "eyes" and many "ears" were ascribed to the King. . . . The King listens to anybody who may claim to have heard or seen anything worthy of attention. And thus the saying comes about, "The King has many ears and many eyes"; and people everywhere are afraid to say anything to the discredit of the King, just as if he himself were listening; or to do anything to harm him, just as if he were present. Not only, therefore, would no one have ventured to say anything derogatory about Cyrus to anyone else, but everyone conducted himself at all times just as if those who were within hearing were so many eyes and ears of the King. I do not know what better reason anyone could assign for this attitude toward him on the part of the people generally, than that it was his policy to do large favors in return for small ones.

In praising Cyrus's generosity, Xenophon confirms the existence and describes the effectiveness of the Persian secret service. Of course, the information was not always given directly to Cyrus and the rewards were not always handed out by him personally. Xenophon's descriptions suggests the existence of a net of intelligence officers reporting what they had learned, or bringing to the king people who had important information to disclose.

Besides this net, a kind of police force must have existed, dealing with day-to-day business. When describing the royal procession, Xenophon mentions (VIII, 3.9) the "mastigoforoi," or men carrying whips. "And policemen with whips in their hands were stationed there, who struck anyone who tried to crowd in."

When we remember how Assurbanapal, King of Assyria, valued the importance of an intelligence service and expected every one of his subjects to report to him what he had spied out, we must confess that Cyrus did not himself invent the idea of a secret service. He simply followed the example of the Assyrians and improved on the system invented by the Assyrian kings. This becomes clearer when we become acquainted with the Persian system of control which, again, is an improvement on the Assyrian system.

In order to demonstrate this, let us quote how Xenophon describes the functioning of the machinery controlling the effectiveness of the administration. After having described the institution of the satrapies and detailed the duties of the satraps, Xenophon continues (VIII, 6.16):

> Year by year a man makes the circuit of the provinces with an army, to help any satrap that may need help, to humble anyone that may be growing rebellious, and to adjust matters if anyone is careless about seeing the taxes paid or protecting the inhabitants, or to see that the land is kept under cultivation, or if anyone is neglectful of anything else that he has been ordered to attend to; but, if he cannot set it right, it is his business to report it to the King, and he, when he hears of it, takes measures in regard to the offender. And those of whom the report often goes out that "the King's son is coming," or "the King's brother," or "the King's eye," these belong to the circuit commissioners; though sometimes they do not put in an appearance at all, for each of them turns back, wherever he may be, when the King commands.

The sending out of the royal commissioners must have been directed according to the information the King and "the King's eye" received from the provinces. In connection with this, Xenophon describes the inauguration of a postal service by Cyrus. His description is worth quoting (VIII, 6.17–18):

> We have observed still another device of Cyrus's for coping with the magnitude of his empire; by means of this institution he would speedily

> discover the condition of affairs, no matter how far distant they might be from him: he experimented to find out how great a distance a horse could cover in a day when ridden hard but so as not to break down, and then he erected post-stations at just such distances and equipped them with horses, and men to take care of them; at each one of the stations he had the proper official appointed to receive the letters that were delivered and to forward them on, to take in the exhausted horses and riders and send on fresh ones.
>
> They say, moreover, that sometimes this express does not stop all night, but the night-messengers succeed the day-messengers in relays, and when that is the case, this express, some say, gets over the ground faster than the cranes. If their story is not literally true, it is at all events undeniable that this is the fastest overland travelling on earth; and it is a fine thing to have immediate intelligence of everything, in order to attend to it as quickly as possible.

This information given by Xenophon is confirmed, and completed, by another Greek historian, Herodotus, born most probably in 484 B.C. in Halicarnassus in Caria (Asia Minor). In his great history of the wars between the Greeks and Persians he gives, among other things, a detailed description of the "Royal Road" from Sardis in Asia Minor to Susa, the Persian capital. Let us quote his report although it contains many unfamiliar names. Herodotus's description is the best illustration of the Persian organizational genius, and it tells us at the same time how greatly the Persian method for procuring rapid intelligence had impressed their contemporaries. This is what Herodotus says (Bk. V, 52):

> Now the nature of this road is as I shall show. All along it are the king's stages and exceeding good hostelries, and the whole of it passes through country that is inhabited and safe. Its course through Lydia and Phrygia [two provinces of Asia Minor] is of the length of twenty stages, and ninety-four and a half parasangs [a Greek measurement]. Next after Phrygia it comes to the river Halys, where there is a defile, which must be passed where the river can be crossed, and a great fortress to guard it. After the passage into Cappadocia the road in that land as far as the borders of Cilicia is of twenty-eight stages and a hundred and four parasangs. On this frontier you must ride through two defiles and pass two fortresses; ride past these, and you will have a journey through Cilicia of three stages and fifteen and a half parasangs. The boundary of Cilicia and Armenia is a navigable river whereof the name is Euphrates. In Armenia there are fifteen resting-stages, and fifty-six parasangs and a half, and there is a fortress there.
>
> From Armenia the road enters the Matienian land [Matieni, a people of dubious origin and locality], wherein are thirty-four stages, and a hundred

> and thirty-seven parasangs. Through this land flow four navigable rivers, that must be passed by ferries, first the Tigris, then a second and a third of the same name, yet not the same stream nor flowing from the same source. . . . When this country is passed, the road is in the Cissian land [Cissians, a people tributary to Persia, living at the head of the Persian Gulf], where are eleven stages and forty-two and a half parasangs, as far as yet another navigable river, the Choaspes, whereon stands the city of Susa. Thus the whole tale of stages is an hundred and eleven. So many resting-stages then there are in the going up from Sardis to Susa. I have rightly numbered the parasangs of the royal road, and the parasang is of thirty furlongs' length [which assuredly it is], then between Sardis and the king's abode called Memnonian [in Susa, Memnon was a legendary king of the Assyrians] there are thirteen thousand and five hundred furlongs, the number of parasangs being four hundred and fifty; and if each day's journey be an hundred and fifty furlongs, then the sum of days spent is ninety, neither more nor less.

For an ordinary passenger—according to Herodotus—the journey from the Greek city of Ephesus on the coast to Sardis and from there to Susa, the Persian capital, lasted three months and three days.

Herodotus's indications concerning the "Royal Road" are of great importance to historians and archaeologists of the lands of the Middle East. They were particularly studied and evaluated by W. M. Ramsay in his *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*. It is now generally admitted that the Persians, as we have seen, used, especially in Asia Minor, roads built by the former masters of those regions, the Hittites and Assyrians. Herodotus knew only of this one road and of this one postal service. But the postal service for royal messengers was organized throughout the whole Empire. Even there the Persians certainly availed themselves of the similar organizations set up by their predecessors, converging the communications towards their new capital, Susa. As a whole, the Persian postal service represents a great achievement, the greatest realized in this respect in ancient history, and it is no wonder that the Greeks, as we can see from the accounts of Xenophon and Herodotus, regarded it as something genuinely outstanding. All this elaborate organization had one main purpose, namely, to obtain quick and reliable intelligence from all parts of the immense empire and from abroad.

The same Herodotus also gives us in another passage interesting details of how this kind of Persian royal post worked in practice. When Xerxes, successor of Darius, invaded Greece, the intelligence service was naturally extended to Europe, and messengers were sent to Susa from the battlefield. It was in this way that Xerxes sent news to the capital concerning the disaster which befell the Persian navy in the naval battle near Salamis. Let us again quote Herodotus, as his report completes our information as to how the postal service was run. He says (Bk. VIII, 98):

> Now there is nothing mortal that accomplishes a course more swiftly than do these messengers, by the Persians' skillful contrivance. It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the men and horses that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day's journey; and these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed. The first rider delivers his charge to the second, the second to the third, and thence it passes on from hand to hand, even as in the Greek torch-bearers' race in honor of Hephaestus. This riding-post is called in Persia, *angareion.*

We have seen already that the name *angaros* is not of Persian but of Babylonian origin.

It seems that the royal messengers were employed not only to bring rapid intelligence but also, as was the case in Assyria, to perform delicate missions, which, in modern countries, would be entrusted to a special branch of the secret police. Nicolas of Damascus, a contemporary of the Jewish king Herod the Great, wrote a long world history which is now lost, but some fragments of the book dealing with the history of the Assyrians and Medes have survived. In one of these fragments (ch. X) he describes intrigues between two royal officials:

> When the king learned that one of them, Nanarus, had kidnapped his rival Parsondas, and was hiding him in feminine disguise among his musicians, the king sent an *angaros* to Nanarus to investigate and to bring Parsondas to the court. When this mission met with no success, the king sent another *angaros*, of higher rank and provided with a written order and a commission to execute the official on the spot if he refused to obey.

The mission of this *angaros* was successful.

The story is, of course, not written by a contemporary. But, as we can judge from Xenophon and from Herodotus, the Persian institutions dealing with intelligence were well known to the Greeks, who were most impressed by them. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Nicolas of Damascus knew well the function of the Persian *angaroi*.

We observe from his report that the intelligence service was organized in hierarchic order. This information appears to be corroborated by Herodotus himself, for when reporting on the youth of Cyrus, Herodotus describes a charming scene in which the future king of Persia was elected king by his playmates and of how the boy-king distributed the different offices among his comrades (Bk. I, 114):

> Then he set them severally to their tasks, some to the building of houses, some to be his bodyguard, one (as I suppose) to be King's Eye; to another he gave the right of bringing him messages; to each he gave his proper work.

It seems that Herodotus, when telling his tale, had in mind some of the most important offices at the Persian court. We know, for instance, that the commandant of the bodyguard held simultaneously the function which corresponds in modern times to that of Vizir. The official called the "King's Eye," one of the most prominent members of the council, is mentioned in many instances, as we have seen. It seems quite natural to suppose that, in a court which had developed such great activity in building cities, monuments, and roads, the man entrusted with the supervision of these constructions should have been counted among the leading members of the Persian "cabinet," or royal council, as seems to be suggested by Herodotus.

If this is so, we can suppose that the director of the royal post office, the *angareion*, and of the royal messengers, the *angaroi*, was also held in great esteem at the court, as can be concluded from Herodotus's account. This seems to be confirmed by what the Greek historians have told us concerning the important function of the royal post. It seems, thus, that the director of the royal post held the position of a "minister of information, or intelligence." We can judge from this how much the great Persian kings valued rapid and reliable intelligence for the security of the state.

Besides this device, the Persians perfected the Assyrian invention of rapid information and organized a kind of telegraphic communication for particularly important intelligence by using fire-signals. Again, it is Herodotus (Bk. IX, 3) who furnishes this information. During the Persian invasion of Greece by Xerxes, this kind of telegraph was extended from the coast of Asia Minor across the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, then held by the Persians, to Attica. It was by means of such fire beacons that general Mardonius wished to communicate to Xerxes, then in Sardis and on his way to Susa, that he had occupied Athens for the second time.

Even this device must have impressed the Greeks. We read in a short work "On the World," falsely attributed to Aristotle, teacher of Alexander the Great, but written most probably in the second half of the first century A.D., an interesting description of the means by which the Persians tried to obtain rapid intelligence. The words deserve to be quoted, as they reflect the great admiration of the Greeks for Persian institutions (Ch. 6, in E. S. Forster's and W. D. Ross's translation, *De Mundo*):

> Nay, we are told that the outward show observed by Cambyses and Xerxes and Darius was magnificently ordered with the utmost pomp and splendor. The King himself, so the story goes, established himself at Susa or Ecbatana, invisible to all, dwelling in a wondrous palace within a fence gleaming with gold and amber and ivory. And it had many gateways, one after another, and porches many furlongs apart from one another, secured by bronze doors and mighty walls. Outside these the chief and most of the distinguished men had their appointed place, some being the King's personal servants, his bodyguard and attendants, others the guardians of each of the enclosing walls, the so-called janitors and "listeners," that the King himself, who was called their master and deity, might thus see and hear all things.
>
> Besides these, others were appointed as stewards of his revenues and leaders in war and hunting, and receivers of gifts, and others charged with all the other necessary functions. All the Empire of Asia, bounded on the west by Hellespont and on the east by the Indies, was apportioned according to races among generals and satraps and subject-princes of the Great King; and there were couriers and watchmen and messengers and superintendents of signal-fires. So effective was the organization, in particular the system of signal-fires, which formed a chain of beacons from the furthest bounds of the Empire to Susa and Ecbatana, that the King received the same day the news of all that was happening in Asia.

The description of the Persian court given by this anonymous author of such a late period, is surprisingly accurate. It is another proof of the great admiration which the Greeks had for the Persian intelligence service. It is most probable that even the great Greek poet and playwright Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.) was inspired by this Persian device to describe in such an exciting form, and in such a picturesque way, the fire-post, which he ascribed to the Trojans in his tragedy, *Agamemnon* (verses 281–315).

The tragedy starts with the monologue of the watchman posted on the roof of Agamemnon's palace at Mycenae, who for years had been watching for the signal-flame to flash from Asia to Mycenae the tidings of the capture of Troy. Suddenly, he perceives a blaze in the night announcing the glad event, and he hurries to bring the news to Agamemnon's wife, Clytaemnestra. The queen summons the chorus of Elders and announces to them that that same night Troy has been captured and destroyed by the Achaeans. When the chorus of Elders asks her how she could have learned so quickly the news of the happy event, and what messenger could have reached her with such speed, Clytaemnestra describes the fire-beacon-telegraph which had been prearranged by Agamemnon.

It is interesting to note that the poet, at the beginning of his description, uses the word *angaros* to designate the courier-flame. This same word was used by the Persians when describing the messengers of the royal post. This may be taken as a clear indication that Aeschylus was well acquainted with the Persian methods of securing rapid intelligence.

It is a very happy coincidence that we have such interesting and accurate information from Greek sources concerning the Persian intelligence services and the means by which confidential information was dispatched to the residence of the "King of Kings" in Susa. Persian literary achievements from the Achaemenian period are not as remarkable and colorful as those of the Babylonians and Assyrians. From the inscriptions of Darius and his successors, composed in a rather military style, we would have learned nothing of the elaborate organizations about which the Greeks had so much to say. We can, however, read "between the lines" of Darius's account of the speedy crushing of so many revolts during his reign, that it was due mainly to the smooth functioning of his intelligence service, which enabled him to act quickly whenever danger threatened. Of course, the king attributes all his success to his supreme god Ahuramazda, who "had granted him the kingdom and had brought him help."

From Xenophon's and Herodotus's laudatory descriptions, we can guess that such elaborate organization of intelligence services was unknown to the Greeks. This is quite natural, for the ancient Greeks lived in small city-states and an intelligence service was not necessary. A democratic spirit could fully develop in surroundings in which all the prominent citizens were known to everyone; such political organizations could never have developed imperialistic ideas. But the extreme democracy of the small Greek states had its shadows. It favored the growth of particularism. So it happened that it was hard for Greek statesmen to convince their citizens of the necessity of federating their limited resources with other city-states in their hour of peril, as they had done when the Persians overran the Greek lands.

In spite of the heroic defense of the Athenian democracy against Persian imperialism, many Athenian statesmen were apprehensive of the weaknesses that such loose political organizations presented for the future of Greece. The attempts of Philip, King of Macedonia, to unify all the Greeks were regarded with sympathy by many, in spite of the thundering condemnations of Philip's imperialistic methods by the famous orator, Demosthenes, the most convinced "democrat." This explains why Philip succeeded so quickly in bringing all of Greece under his sway. But under his son Alexander the Great the hour struck when the Greeks took their revenge, and Macedonian and Greek soldiers invaded Persia and destroyed the immense Persian Empire.

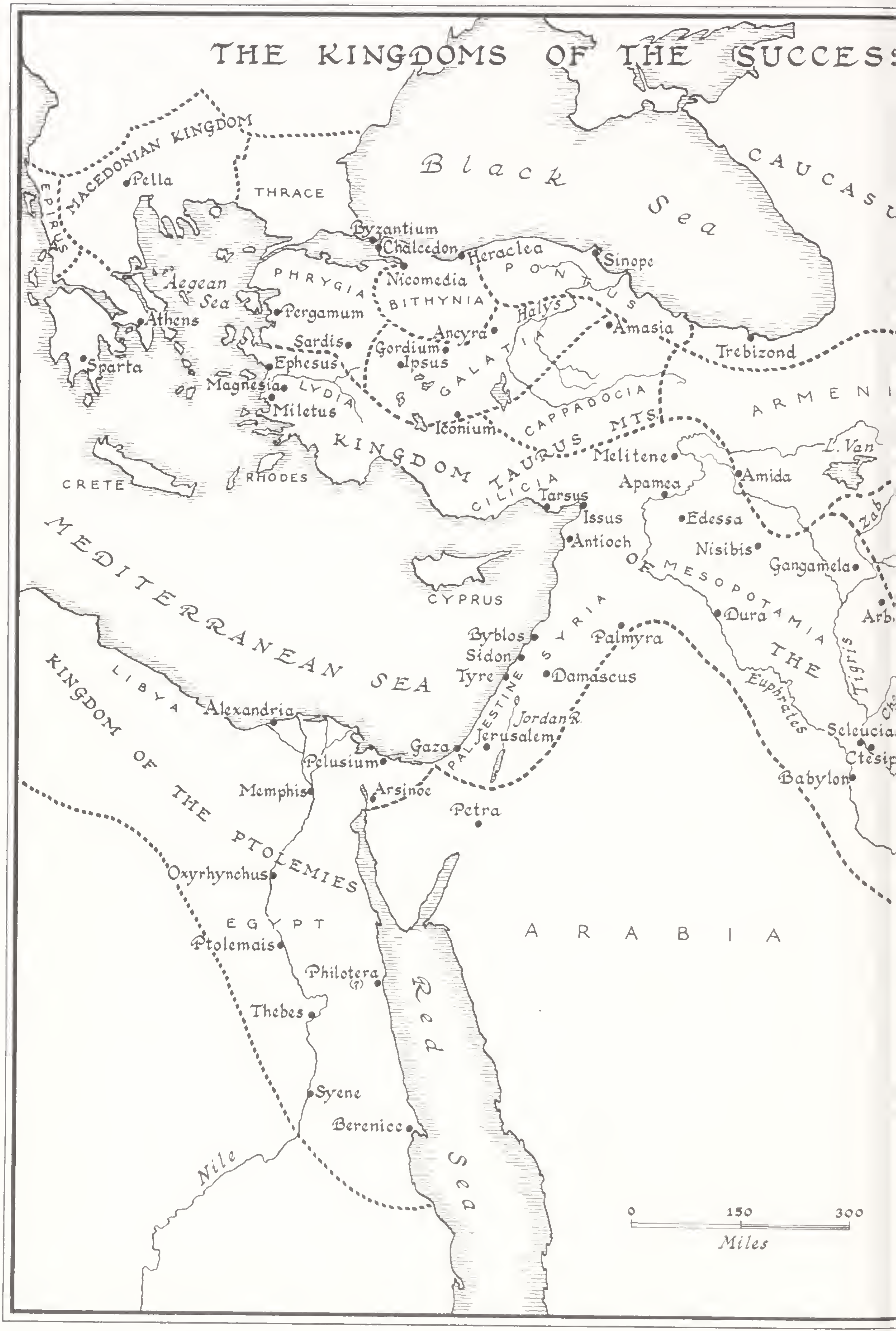
The rapid and victorious march of Alexander the Great through Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia to the valley of the Indus was made possible, first of all, by the military genius of the young conqueror. The Persian Empire was on the decline. But, curiously enough, Alexander's rapid progress was considerably facilitated by some institutions founded by the great Persian kings and their predecessors, the Assyrians. Alexander's army often marched along the roads built by the Assyrians, Hittites, and Persians, and the political division of the Empire into satrapies proved so efficient that the new conqueror found it advantageous to change it as little as possible. We know that the young king was well aware of the difficulties which the multitude of different races presented in such an enormous empire. He perfected the Persian method of administration, respecting the creeds and customs of the different nations, and attracted Persian grandees to his court. Perhaps due to the influence of Xenophon's work on Cyrus, he was a fervent admirer of the founder of Persian greatness and regarded himself as Cyrus's successor.

All this shows that Alexander was determined to use all the Persian inventions in the field of intelligence services for his own purposes. This was absolutely necessary for the survival of the really universal empire founded by the great Macedonian. We have no news concerning our subject during the short reign of Alexander, and we can only judge, from the fact that Persian institutions survived under Alexander's successors, that the young king knew enough to appreciate the importance of not only good but rapid intelligence. He extended the service to Greece. His genius would have certainly improved the service on which so many great conquerors—Egyptian, Assyrian, and Persian—had worked.

Fate decided against Alexander, and with his unexpected death on June 13, 323 B.C., his immense empire lost its founder, and the only man able to hold it together and expand it. After prolonged wars between Alexander's generals, the empire was finally divided into three great monarchies: that of Egypt under the dynasty founded by Ptolemy, Asia under the Seleucid dynasty, and Macedonia, which held part of Hellas, under the dynasty founded by Antigonus. The States of the Seleucids and of the Ptolemies were based on the absolute power of the kings, who sought justification for their practice of proclaiming themselves divine, following in this the example of Alexander. They were alien to the native populations and could rely only on the Greek colonists whose number they tried to increase by every conceivable means. The Seleucids had an especially difficult problem in this respect, as their state was composed of many different races. It is thus natural to suppose that these two new political structures, created on the ruins of the old cultures of the Near East, needed more than anything else a reliable intelligence service.

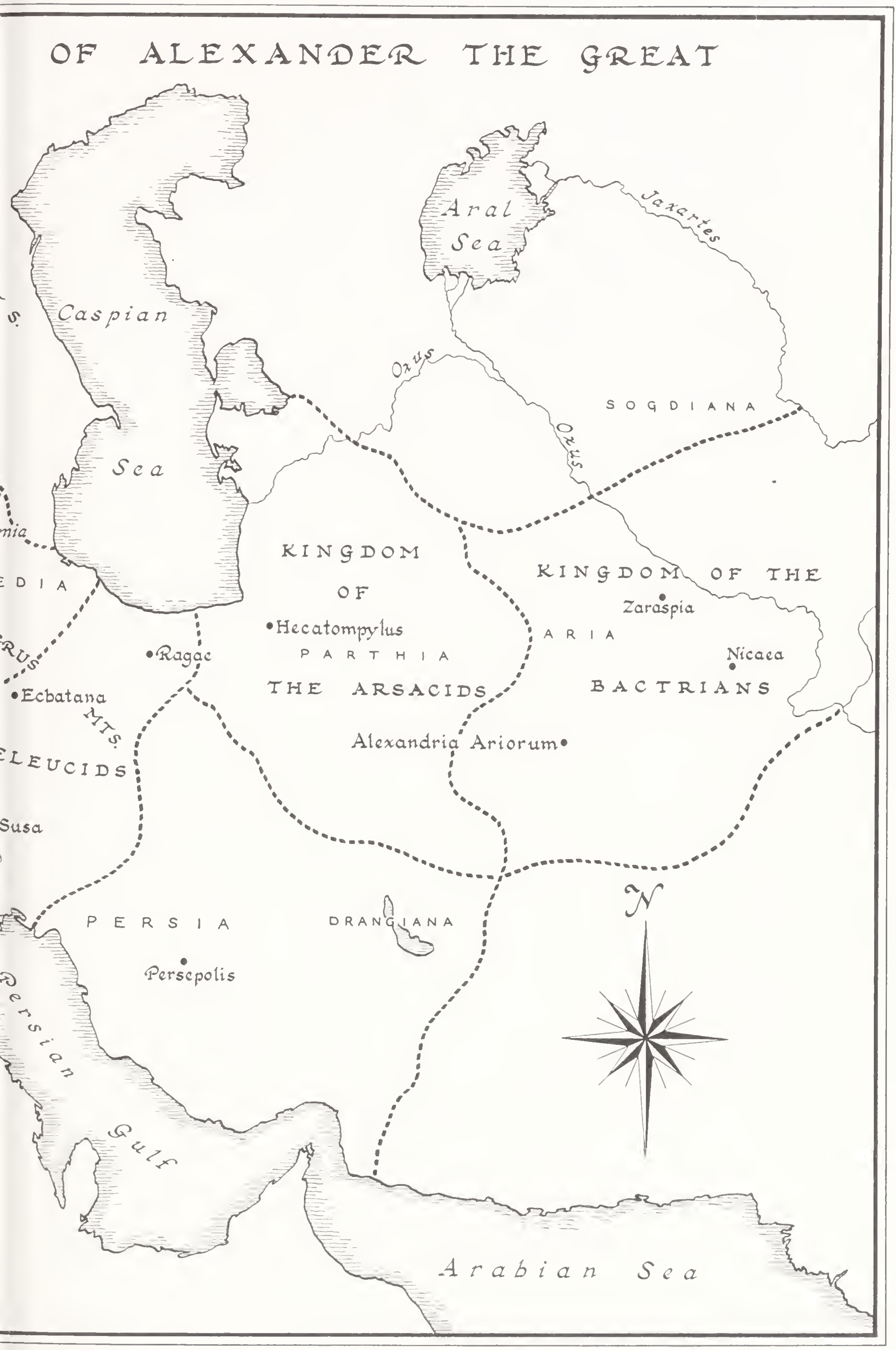
With regard to this essential service of assuring rapid intelligence—the regular postal communications with the center of government—we are in possession of a most reliable document revealing the smooth functioning of such a service in the Egypt of the Ptolemies. On a papyrus which has, fortunately, been preserved (republished and analyzed by F. Preisigke), there was discovered part of an official daybook written by an employee of the Egyptian royal post. The papyrus dates most probably from the reign of Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.), and the daybook must have been written about the year 255 B.C. It pictures the activity at an important post office somewhere in the center of the country, from the sixteenth to the twenty-third day of a month which is not marked. The employee of the post listed very carefully how many packets of documents, called *kylistoi*, and letters had been received and re-expedited to the king, or to his minister of finance in Alexandria, or from the capital to a destination in the south of the country. In most instances, the hour of the reception or re-expedition is given. Letters and packets of documents, in the form of a roll, were despatched by special couriers on horseback.

Although the document is incomplete and presents only one page of the official daybook, one has the impression that the royal post was well organized. Each post office had its own employees,



THE KINGDOMS OF THE SUCCES

MACEDONIAN KINGDOM
Pella
EPIRUS
THRACE
Black Sea
CAUCASU
Byzantium
Chalcedon
Heraclea
Sinope
PONTUS
Nicomedia
PHRYGIA
BITHYNIA
Aegean Sea
Athens
Pergamum
Halys
Amasia
Trebizond
Sparta
Sardis
Ancyra
Gordium
Ipsus
GALATIA
Ephesus
Magnesia
LYDIA
Miletus
Iconium
CAPPADOCIA
ARMENI
TAURUS MTS
KINGDOM
CILICIA
Melitene
L. Van
Amida
Apamea
Tarsus
Issus
CRETE
RHODES
Edessa
Antioch
Nisibis
Zab
Gangamela
Arb
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CYPRUS
OF MESOPOTAMIA
THE
SYRIA
Byblos
Sidon
Palmyra
Dura
Tyre
Damascus
Tigris
Euphrates
LIBYA
KINGDOM OF THE PTOLEMIES
Alexandria
PALESTINE
Jordan R.
Jerusalem
Gaza
Pelusium
Seleucia
Ctesip
Babylon
Memphis
Arsinoe
Petra
Oxyrhynchus
EGYPT
ARABIA
Ptolemais
Philotera (?)
Red Sea
Thebes
Syene
Berenice
Nile
0
150
300
Miles


OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT
Aral Sea
Jaxartes
Caspian
Sea
S.
Oxus
Oxus
SOGDIANA
mia
EDIA
RUS
KINGDOM OF PARTHIA THE ARSACIDS
KINGDOM OF THE BACTRIANS
Zaraspia
ARIA
Nicaea
Hecatompylus
Ragae
Ecbatana
MTS.
LEUCIDS
Alexandria Ariorum
Susa
PERSIA
DRANGIANA
Persepolis
N
Persian Gulf
Arabian Sea

and horses for the couriers were delivered by the so-called *Klerouchoi,* or military colonists, who had been given farms by the king and who lived near the postline between the different post offices. It was not a very heavy burden, as these colonists received many privileges from the king. It seems that the colonists exempted from this obligation were required to pay a special tax called *anippias,* the income from which may have served to cover the cost of the service. This service was strictly for official use only, and no private letters or communications were expedited. An exception may have been made for the military colonists delivering horses for the couriers. The service must have been very regular, for, as we see in the document in question, we are entitled to conclude that the couriers arrived in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

The station, whose activity is reflected in a single leaf from its daybook, lay on the left bank of the Nile. It is probable that there was a corresponding postline running along the right bank as well. In several papyri of the third century B.C. there is mention of a city in the center of the country, on the right of the river, called Hipponon. Xenophon calls the stations of the Persian post *hipponas,* which means (horse) stable. It is thus quite possible that the place called Hipponon was simply an important station of the Egyptian royal post where the couriers' horses were stabled. If this is true, then we have here an indication that in Ptolemaic Egypt there existed two important postlines, one on either side of the Nile.

Besides the rapid post communications, there was in Ptolemaic Egypt an ordinary post service, composed of messengers travelling on foot from one station to another. By this means, documents and letters of lesser importance were carried. The existence of such a service is confirmed by the discovery of a papyrus (also analyzed by F. Preisigke) containing the order to pay the salaries of employees in an important relay center in this kind of post. Even this service was well organized, as we deduce from the document. The order is given to pay the salary to the director of the office, called *horographos,* to the policemen, or *ephodos,* watching over the safety of the packets and documents to be transmitted, to forty-four messengers, or *bybliaphoroi,* and to a camel driver, or *kamelites.* These numerous messengers were employed for the expedition of official orders and documents. The camel was used, most probably, for the transport of the larger documents and for long-distance travelling. There is, however, no further indication in this short document from which we can discover any more details about the functioning of this service.

The papyrus in question dates from the year 111 B.C. We may assume that this kind of post office represented a further development of the information services described above. Messengers on horseback were bearers of important information to be delivered as fast as possible to the residence. They were the proper agents of the Ptolemaic intelligence service, which was the continuation of that introduced by the Persians. The post service carried out by messengers on foot seems to have been another expansion of this service, characteristic of the Ptolemaic period. It was used mainly for administrative purposes, and we know that the administration in Ptolemaic Egypt was highly centralized and bureaucratic. This made it necessary to develop the post service in the manner revealed to us by the papyrus from 111 B.C. This service worked exclusively for the government, and private communications were not accepted for transmission.

We have an idea of how this service functioned from the Papyrus Petrie, on which is written a report of naval operations. The document in question was sent by an "admiral," or *nauarchos*, about the year 246 B.C. The admiral described in a concise and clear manner three operations executed by his ships during the third war waged between Egypt and the Seleucids for Syria. The precision with which the report is made suggests that the naval officer kept a very accurate log in which he noted carefully all the operations and movements of his fleet. He knew that the king wished to be informed regularly about his activities, and this knowledge compelled him to enter in his log all the information that could be of interest to the government.

Another detail deserves mention which illustrates that the Ptolemaic information service was concerned with other matters in addition to purely political and military intelligence. It is known that in the Hellenistic period the use of elephants was a very important factor in the military technique of the time. The Seleucids were able to procure for themselves as many elephants as they needed from India, but Egypt had none. As the Ptolemies would not be defeated in this matter, King Philadelphus ordered a careful exploration of the west coast of the Red Sea and the coast of Somaliland, where the elephant was to be found in great plenty. As the intelligence he received from these regions was favorable, he established special hunting stations in those territories, and arranged shipping facilities for the transport of the captured beasts to Egypt. There was a lively official correspondence between Alexandria and the hunting stations, the letters coming from the latter being transported, together with the captured elephants, from the Egyptian harbors of Philotera and Berenice, especially equipped for the transport of these beasts by special caravans, along a well-organized and protected road, to the Nile. The animals were then kept in special parks under the care of expert trainers brought from India.

It was this communication and information service which formed the backbone of the entire highly centralized administrative system of Ptolemaic Egypt, gave it the necessary cohesion, and assured its smooth and precise functioning. This also explains why the State of the Ptolemies, in spite of the difference between the reigning Macedonian dynasty with its great, but foreign, Greek culture, and that of the Egyptians with their centuries-old traditions and civilization, on the whole presented a very solid political structure. Thus it was able to play an important role in the so-called Hellenistic period, which began with Alexander the Great and ended with the conquest of the Near East by the Romans.

The Hellenistic period was, however, not as propitious to the evolution of an intelligence service abroad as was the period of the great Egyptian, Assyrian, and Persian conquerors. The three great States which divided between themselves the inheritance of Alexander the Great were all determined to become great world powers and to be respected as such, but none of them possessed the ambition to become a universal empire. They were jealous of each other. The Seleucids and the Ptolemies disputed among themselves the domination of Syria, and both tried desperately to secure Macedonia and the Greek city-states for themselves, for they needed both Greek soldiers and Greek colonists. Moreover, Macedonia and Egypt were competing for supremacy over the islands in the Aegean Sea, and over Hellas itself. After much fighting and bickering, a kind of unsteady balance between the three powers was established. This lack of interest in events beyond the sphere of their limited ambitions was fatal to all of them in the end. Had they devoted more attention to the growing ambitions of the new world power of Rome in the West—drawing nearer and nearer to the Greek world and to Asia—and had they combined their considerable diplomatic and military forces to check the Roman expansion in the Near East, not only would they have survived, but they would have changed the whole further evolution of humanity.

There was, however, another kind of intelligence which had developed considerably during this period, namely, military intelligence. The great pioneer in this art, so far new to the Greeks, was

Xenophon. The wars between the city-states, waged mostly in familiar country, demanded no special exertions in intelligence. The primitive, simple methods which suited every nation amply sufficed in this type of warfare. For the first time in its history, a considerable Greek military detachment had the opportunity of waging war in a foreign country in 401 B.C., when a great number of Greek mercenaries joined the expedition of the younger Cyrus against his brother, Artaxerxes II, King of Persia. When Cyrus lost his life and the whole expedition collapsed, the Greek army found itself without leaders, its officers having been treacherously murdered by a Persian satrap, over a thousand miles from home. It was Xenophon who came forward to become the leading spirit of the army and, thanks to his military talent, the Greeks safely crossed the wilds of Kurdistan, the highlands of Armenia and Georgia and, in a five-months' march, reached Trebizond on the Black Sea, on whose shores numerous Greek colonies were established.

Xenophon described this remarkable military achievement in chapter III of *Anabasis*, or the "Up-Country March." We read in this description that he had profited greatly from the Persian military techniques based on centuries-long experience, and inherited partly from the Assyrians. Instead of the primitive means to which the Greeks were accustomed at home, Xenophon established special military detachments whose unique purpose was to reconnoiter unfamiliar terrain, to discover the position and the strength of the enemy forces, and to ascertain the sentiments of the natives towards the Greeks. On the basis of this intelligence, the officers decided upon the further course of the march. In this manner, ambushes were avoided and the main body of the troops was protected against sudden attack.

Xenophon's descriptions of this practice, new to the Greeks, are contained in his numerous writings and contributed considerably to the development of the strategic art in general. This method was followed and further developed by Alexander the Great and helped him greatly in achieving military success.

For this kind of military intelligence, the light cavalry was naturally best suited. This discovery was made by Alexander and his example was imitated by his generals in the numerous wars for his inheritance. It is for this reason that in the Hellenistic period the use of cavalry in military operations became increasingly accentuated in contradiction to the old-fashioned Greek custom of stressing the importance of the infantry, the Greek *hoplitês*. There is a strong indication that the Romans had no stable and organized military intelligence before Caesar's time. The latter must have benefited greatly from his stay in the Near East.

The best picture we have of the great progress made by military intelligence during this period is from a Greek author describing the intelligence organizations formed by Philip III, King of Macedonia. Polybius (Bk. X, 42.7 ff.), 204–122 B.C., reports that Philip organized throughout the whole of his state a signalling system to enable him to receive as fast as possible any information about any kind of danger and, in particular, of attempts of enemy invasion. On the heights, watchful guards were posted to relay any fire signal they had observed. Because Philip and his son Perseus insisted so much on the regular functioning of this signalling service, it must have been of practical use to them. This is the first known case of a fire signalling service being fully established on Greek soil. There is no doubt that the Macedonian kings simply imitated the signalling service which had functioned for so long in Persia. It can be assumed that this method of transmitting news may have been known to the Greeks in the earliest period of their history, since it is the most natural means of signalling. Reliable information as to the use of fire signalling by the Greeks on a wider scale is recorded in the fifth century B.C., especially during the period of their struggle with the Persians. By then, the elaborate organization of this type of news transmission in Persia was known to the Greeks, and the example may have spurred them on to use this means of signalling in a more prominent way.

This method of sending important intelligence was, of course, very rapid for that early period, but it had handicaps. It worked only by prearranged signals, and only essential information indicating an emergency could be transmitted in this manner. This must have been observed by both the Assyrians and the Persians, and it is natural to suppose that attempts to offset this handicap had been made. Unfortunately, we have no information which would enable us to conclude that they, too, had already invented a system of sending detailed information in this way.

So it happens that we know only of the improved fire signalling system invented by Aeneas, the first Greek writer on strategy, who lived in the fourth century B.C. His work is preserved only in fragments, but his signalling system is fully described by Polybius (Bk. X, 43). It is a combination of a water clock and fire signalling. Both the sending and the receiving station had to be supplied with an earthen vessel of exactly the same dimensions, with a hole near the bottom which could be filled with a cork. The vessels were filled with water. In the middle swam a cork pierced by a wooden stick with marks placed at different intervals. Each mark had special significance. At a fire signal both stations opened the vessel. When the cork in the vessel marked the news to be transmitted, the sending station signalled the receiving station to stop the flowing of the water and to read the information transmitted.

In this way, Polybius asserts, more detailed information could be sent, especially concerning the nature of an enemy invasion, or the special needs of the population, but, even in this case, the service was limited. We have no evidence if and how it worked in practice.

Polybius refers to the fact that two other Greeks, Kleoxenos and Demokleitos, had both tried to improve this system and, on the basis of their inventions, he himself imagined a kind of telegraphy by fire signals. The main idea of his device was to facilitate the transmission of whole sentences by signalling the different letters of the alphabet. For this purpose, he divided the alphabet into five sections, each of them comprising five letters. The signalling stations were divided into two parts or towers. The first part (or tower) signalled the number of the section of the alphabet from which the letter to be transmitted should be taken, and the second part (or tower) signalled by one, two, three, four, or five signals which letter of the indicated section it should be. The man at the receiving station charged with the reading of the signals, was advised to use a diopter, a kind of primitive telescope which, of course, did not magnify but only limited the vision to a precise spot in order to facilitate the exact reading of the signals.

Polybius's system represents, without a doubt, great progress in the fire signalling of important intelligence. But even this system had serious handicaps. If it worked in the proper way, the stations had to be erected at short distances and manned by well-trained crews. The system might have worked over short distances, but could hardly have been used on a very large scale. It was too expensive. However, Polybius's idea must have survived. We shall see that, according to the report of Julius Africanus, the Romans seem to have improved on Polybius's system and used it for their own purposes.

We do not have as much information on the intelligence services of the Seleucid state as we have from Ptolemaic Egypt. The most important facts are given by Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian who lived in the time of Caesar and Augustus. His *Library of History* is only partially preserved; fortunately, that dealing with the wars for Alexander's inheritance is intact. We learn from Diodorus that the Persian institutions and the means of transmitting important intelligence continued to exist and to be employed by Alexander's successors. In one instance, we even learn additionally that in certain parts of Persia, important news was transmitted very fast by the use of sound. When reporting how a considerable number of Persian bowmen could be mobilized in a very short time, Diodorus says (Bk. XIX, 17):

> Although some of the Persians were distant a thirty days' journey, they all received the order on that very day, thanks to the skillful arrangement of the posts of the guard, a matter that it is not well to pass over in silence. Persia is cut by many narrow valleys and has many lookout posts that are high and close together, on which those of the inhabitants who had the loudest voices had been stationed. Since these posts were separated from each other by the distance at which a man's voice can be heard, those who received the order passed it on in the same way to the next, and then these in turn to others until the message had been delivered at the border of the satrapy.

In another passage (Bk. XIX, 37) we learn that to transport urgent messages, the messengers were given fast dromedaries which could "travel continuously for almost fifteen hundred stades," or about one hundred and seventy miles.

Further on, we learn that the old Persian post service in Asia Minor was re-established and kept in working order by Antigonus, a rival of Seleucus, the founder of the Seleucid political power (Bk. XIX, 57): "He himself established at intervals throughout all that part of Asia of which he was master a system of fire-signals and dispatch-carriers, by means of which he expected to have quick service in all his business."

There is every reason to suppose that all these systems continued to function when Seleucus became master of the vast empire after Antigonus had fallen in battle. The postal and military roads founded by the Assyrians and Persians seem to have been kept in good order, which is quite natural when we think of the continuous fighting in which Seleucus's successors were engaged. There are indications pointing to the fact that Roman military maps of those regions were copied from the maps of the Seleucid period. Although no new roads appear to have been built in the former Persian Empire under the Seleucids, the old Persian postal road may have been extended into the province of Ferghana on the Jaxartes when it was conquered by the Seleucids.

The old Persian tradition of building roads for commerce and administration was followed also in the Parthian empire. The original Parthis, corresponding to modern Khorasan, became part of the Seleucid empire, but won its independence in 249 B.C. under Arsaces, founder of the Arsacid dynasty. The Arsacids increased their sway over some of the provinces of the Seleucids and, in spite of the progress of the Romans into the East, they remained in power until A.D. 226, when the last Arsacids were killed by Artaxerxes (Ardashir I). He is the founder of the Sassanid dynasty which renewed the past glory of the old Persian empire as it had flourished under the Achaemenids.

From the time of the Parthian empire is preserved a document called *The Parthian Stations* ascribed to Isidore of Charax. It is a description of the overland trade route giving an itinerary of the caravan trail from Antioch to the borders of India. It lists all the supply stations maintained by the Parthian government and also the intervening distances. It seems to be a summary transcription from a larger work describing the road system in Parthia. This work may be connected with the "Description of the World" which, according to Pliny (Bk. VI, 141) was compiled by Isidore as a commission by Augustus. The latter wished to collect all the geographical and other information about Parthia and Armenia, which the Roman army was about to invade, under the command of the Emperor's grandson, Gaius. The work is fragmentarily preserved. The supply stations had to serve as caravansaries for merchants, but the document also contains a number of inferences giving indications about the relations of Parthia with its subject states and the neighboring foreign powers. It seems that the roads and stations were used for other than just commercial purposes.

It should be stressed that the Parthian stations follow the ancient route established earlier by the Assyrians and Persians, which shows us that the old postal traditions for the passage of intelligence were continued by the Parthians.

The Sassanian Empire is rather a national Persian or Iranian Empire. Its "king of kings" revived all the Achaemenid traditions and tried to extend their power over lands which were formerly part of the Achaemenid Empire. Although we have no official description of the post service during this period, we can suppose with certainty that the Sassanian kings followed the Achaemenid tradition even in this respect in reorganizing the postal service as it had functioned in the Achaemenid Empire. The interests of the state demanded the rapid expedition of orders and letters from the kings to their satraps, and of information concerning the provinces by the governors to the king and his vizir. Besides couriers on horseback, a service of runners was established with stations at shorter distances.

These runners appear to have been employed mostly in strictly Iranian lands; a camel post service functioned mainly in Syriac and Arabic countries.

It is probable that the director of relays was also charged to observe how the administration of the provinces functioned, and to make reports to the court. At least, as we shall see, such was the duty of the post master when Persia had become part of the Caliphate. The Arab Muslims continued to use the post service as they had found it in Persia. It seems that at certain periods such an information service was expected from the judges of the cantons. Anyhow, the Sassanian kings did possess a secret service. Christensen (p. 130) stresses that this secret service was especially resented by the population under Chosroes I, but the king defended the system, declaring that he would appoint as his "eye" only honest men.

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II

Intelligence in the Roman Empire

1. Republican Period
Lack of Interest in Intelligence in Early Rome and Reasons for Roman Expansion—Intelligence Service of the Carthaginians, Rivals of the Romans—Hannibal's Mastery of Intelligence—Scipio the Younger Learns from Hannibal—T. Sempronius Gracchus and the Macedonian Relay Service—Cato the Elder Values the Importance of Rapid Information—Slowness of Republican Information System—Messengers and Their Status.

2. Period of Civil Wars
Roman Traders and Financial Agents in Newly Conquered Lands—Mithridates of Pontus, His Intelligence in Asia, Rome, and Spain—Cicero's Information on Intelligence in Asia—The Pirates and Insecurity of Sea Travel—Caesar's Understanding of Military, Political, Geographical, and Economic Intelligence—Caesar's Information on Gallic Intelligence Service—Caesar Establishes Information Service by Relays of Horsemen—His Tragic Death.

3. Imperial Period
Rise of Octavian-Augustus and Personal Experience in Importance of Intelligence—Founding of the State Post (*cursus publicus*)—Oriental Influences on Its Organization—Organization of the State Post—The *mansiones* and Changing-Stations—Transformation of the *frumentarii* from Grain Dealers to Intelligence Agents—The *speculatores* and the *frumentarii* as Intelligence Agents of the Emperors—The *frumentarii* as Policemen and Agents in Persecution of Christians—The *fru-*

mentarii, a Roman "Gestapo"?—Their Suppression by Diocletian—Roman Intelligence from Abroad—Roman and Greek Geographical and Ethnographical Intelligence—Pliny the Elder and Tacitus—The Information Service on the *limes.*

1. Republican Period

When we bear in mind the rapid evolution of intelligence services in the empires of the Near East, and when we consider how greatly the rulers of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia valued good intelligence for the defense of their countries, for their political expansion, and for the security of their dynasties, it is rather surprising to see that the Romans, whose domination finally extended over the greater part of the ancient Near Eastern empires, manifested in the early period of their history very little interest in intelligence. This fact is the more startling to those who believe that the Roman expansion over Italy, Western Europe, the Adriatic, Greece, the Mediterranean lands, and the Near East was directed from the beginning by ruthless imperialism and a thirst for power and domination. We have seen that a good intelligence service was, in the East, one of the most striking characteristics of absolute power and a basis for successful political expansion.

But this long-held opinion concerning the expansion of Roman power over the ancient world seems to need radical correction. The Roman Empire began as a small city-state similar in extent and organization to the Greek city republics. The first conquests which made Rome the dominant power in Latium and southern Etruria were made by powerful Etruscan lords who had established themselves in the city and ruled it as absolute kings. After the expulsion of the alien dynasty and the establishment of a republic, ruled by two consuls elected every year by the Senate, Rome shrank again to a comparatively small state, surrounded by hostile and independent neighbors. In spite of their alliance with the Latins, the Romans made little progress in their campaigns against the Etruscan states that threatened their independence. The Etruscans were weakened by the Greeks advancing from Sicily who wrested from them the mastery of the seas, and by the Celts—the Gauls—who, after establishing themselves in the lands bordering the Adriatic, crossed the Apennines and invaded Etruria proper. Only then were the Romans able to defeat the southern Etrurian states and add their lands to the Roman territory.

All these campaigns were waged by the Romans not so much with a view to conquering new lands as to defending their own independence and very existence. One of the reasons for this slow progress might have been the almost complete lack of any organized intelligence service. We find much evidence of this in the Roman historian Livy's description of these events. On one occasion, when the Etruscans made a *razzia* against Rome, according to Livy (Bk. I, 14), only the ". . . sudden stampede [of the farmers from] the fields into the city brought the first tidings of war." On another occasion (Livy, Bk. I, 37), the city learned of a victorious battle only when the waters of the Tiber brought the shields of fallen enemies inside the walls. The army of the Etruscans, trying to re-establish their expelled king in Rome, seems also to have taken the Romans completely by surprise, although the Senate of the city was, according to Livy (Bk. II, 9–10), aware of the danger from this quarter threatening the existence of the new Republic. Nevertheless, apparently no precautions were taken, and the citizens hastily withdrew from their fields to the city when the enemy appeared. And the enemy would have captured the Capitol but for the bravery of Horatius Cocles who, singlehanded, stopped the onrush of the Etruscans from the Janiculum. He gave his friends time to demolish the bridge over the Tiber, then swam across the river in full armor, a feat forever remembered in Rome.

As the territory of the Roman state in its early evolution could easily be crossed in a one-day march, it would not have been difficult to establish a kind of information service, but the Romans do not seem to have thought of it. According to Livy, the Romans were also surprised in 390 B.C., when the Gauls, enraged by the fact that Roman envoys, contrary to international custom, had taken up arms to fight on the side of their enemies, marched against the city. Although this report of Livy (Bk. V, 37) seems exaggerated, the disastrous defeat which the Romans suffered would have resulted in a complete destruction of the city, had the defenders of the Roman Capitol not withstood the long siege. This again leads us to the conclusion that the Romans underestimated the necessity of securing good information as to the nature, the intentions, and the movements of their neighbors and rivals. The famous incident during the siege of the Capitol by the Gauls (Livy, Bk. V, 47), when the cackling of geese awakened the sleeping defenders who, thanks to this lucky incident, were able to drive away the Gauls scaling the walls, can be quoted as another example of the Roman lack of experience in basic principles of intelligence in the early stages of their history.

Rome recovered after the withdrawal of the Gauls and continued the warfare against southern Etruria which, at that time, was her most dangerous foe. She succeeded not only in subjugating the southern Etrurian tribes, but also in re-establishing her prestige among the Latins; by 343 B.C. the first stage in the Roman conquest of Italy was closed. The discord among the Samnites and Apulians, the two mighty Etruscan tribes in southern Italy, was of assistance to Rome, then acting as protector of Latium and Campania, not only in pacifying these and other hostile tribes, but in extending her supremacy over a great part of southern Italy, and in putting her in direct touch with the Greeks who had advanced thither from Sicily.

These rapid advances in southern Italy alarmed the northern Etruscans, who then attacked Roman territory. This incident opened a new period in the Roman conquest of Italy and led to the defeat of the Etruscans and their new allies, the Gauls, established in the Po Valley. Further Roman progress in the south was again inaugurated, not by Roman lust for power, but by the appeal for help from the Greek cities on the southern coast of Italy, harassed by the Sabellian tribes on their borders. When Tarentum, the most powerful of the Greek cities, later changed its policy towards Rome and appealed for help to Pyrrhus, King of Epirus and one of the most brilliant Greek generals produced by the age of Alexander the Great and his successors, the Romans for the first time crossed swords with the Greeks. Only the stubborn determination of the Senate saved the Romans, twice defeated by the adventurous king. The conflict ended with the submission of Tarentum and the retreat of Pyrrhus to Greece. This conflict brought the Romans into contact with the Phoenicians or Carthaginians, who were masters of a great part of Sicily. The first contact was friendly—an alliance against the common danger coming from Pyrrhus.

Conflict with Carthage became inevitable, however, when Rome tried to protect her own interests and those of her allies in Italy. Carthaginian power was established in Sicily, in Sardinia, and in Corsica. It was evident that the Phoenicians were aiming at complete supremacy of the seas and the monopolization of all commerce in the Mediterranean Sea, the realization of which would have been disastrous for both Rome and Italy. The struggle which ensued between the two most powerful cities of that time became a fight for life or death. It resulted first in the annexation of Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia by the Romans, but it could also have ended the role of Rome as a great power in Italy. The struggle for the Po Valley, where the Gauls were established and which was conquered after the first so-called Punic War, was renewed by the unruly Gauls themselves, who in 225 B.C. had once more crossed the Apennines and come within three days' journey of Rome. Spain became a great menace to Rome when the Carthaginians, trying to compensate for the loss of the great Italian islands, established themselves there and began to use Spain as the base for the invasion of Italy and the destruction of Rome itself.

The defense of Italy, and of its commerce in the Adriatic Sea, brought the Roman legions into the neighborhood of Macedonia and Greece following the destruction by the Roman navy of the vessels of the Illyrian pirates (228 B.C.); the pirates had endangered the seas with their raids, and the Roman envoys were welcomed as friends by the Greek city-states.

The destruction of Carthage, weakened by the ruinous wars with Rome, was perhaps unnecessary, but this cruel vengeance on a defeated enemy is explained by the anxiety to risk no longer the danger from Africa, which generations of Romans had had to face. Finally, the conquest of Macedonia was undertaken in order to protect Italy and Rome from that quarter. The Romans had not forgotten that Philip V of Macedon concluded an alliance with Hannibal, that most dreaded Carthaginian leader, and the Senate had good reason to mistrust the ambitious King Philip and his successor, Perseus. Similar reasons caused the wars with the Seleucids, which finally brought the Romans into Asia Minor and Syria.

All this resulted in an immense expansion of Roman power, an achievement never imagined by the first rulers of the small city-state on the Tiber. It was not the realization of plans elaborated upon in advance by generations of Roman leaders envisaging the greatest political expansion of the Republic; rather, it was brought about by a series of incidents unforeseen, mostly unprovoked and unexpected. All these successes were the fruit of a stubborn and indomitable will on the part of the Romans who, even in their darkest moments when Rome's walls echoed the cries of the approaching enemy, never lost courage, by the individual genius of great leaders, descendants of the old Roman families, and by the compactness of the Italian confederacy forged by Roman statesmen. In the hour of its greatest danger, the inhabitants of the peninsula perceived clearly that their safety would be secured only under Rome's leadership.

We are entitled to think that the climb to this supremacy would have been easier and less costly for the Romans had they paid more attention to the importance of a good information service. But it seems that the simple, straightforward, unspoiled Roman peasant stock, the basis of the proud Roman race, looked with supreme disdain upon anything which appeared artificial and disingenuous. During the whole existence of the Roman Republic, we find no single trace of any organized system for obtaining information on developments among neighboring peoples, or of the plans of the enemy. We look in vain for evidence that the Romans used even the most primitive means of transmitting intelligence as, for example, by fire or smoke signals. They seem to have relied, in the early Republican period, on information given them by their allies of the movements of dangerous neighbors. We find numerous pieces of evidence of this kind in Livy's historical work. From the manner in which he describes this kind of information, we have the impression that the Romans themselves had not even thought of establishing a systematic intelligence service and that they possessed no special agents among the befriended and allied tribes. They left it entirely to their allies to keep them informed of events which might endanger their common interests. Livy's description tells us that this voluntary information service worked quite well as long as it was in the interest of the befriended tribes to keep Rome informed. It naturally collapsed when the tribe became hostile to Rome and succeeded in persuading its neighbors to its own plans. Other sources of political information were the Roman and Latin colonists who settled in important places in the conquered territories. But no systematic service was organized there either, and it was left to the colonists themselves to find means by which the capital could be kept informed of dangerous developments in their area. It was the reputation of Roman toughness and energy and the trust in Roman fidelity to her allies—the *fides Romana*—which kept this primitive information service going.

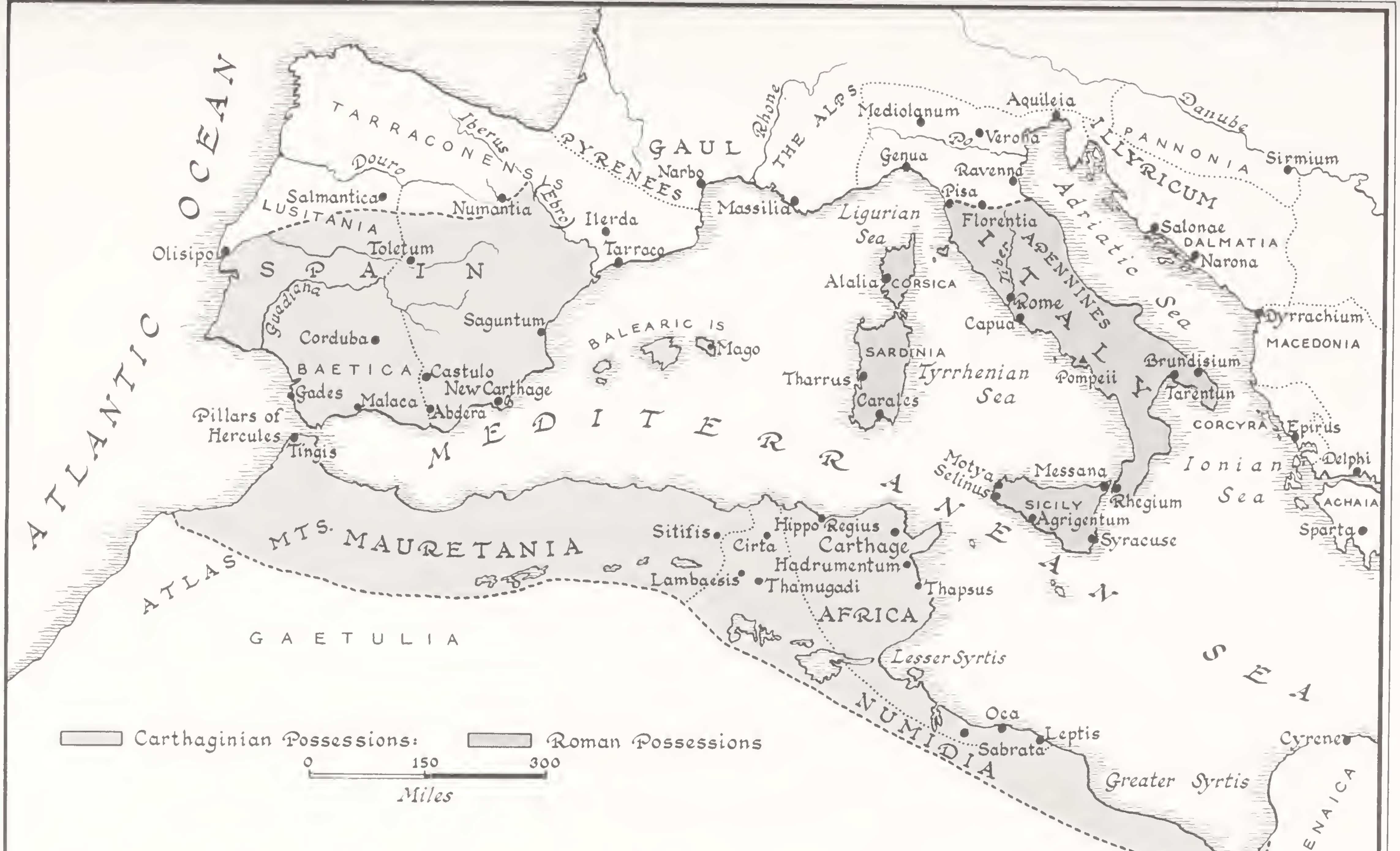
Moreover, we do not see any marked progress in military intelligence. The Roman legions of course used the basic strategic ruses and arts common to all peoples, and often profited from information elicited from traitors and deserters, but the Senate and its consuls in the field experienced difficulty keeping in touch, as there was no organized courier service between the fighting forces and the homeland.

It is easy to understand that such a situation was full of danger and often put a great strain on Roman diplomacy and the military forces. This neglect of an intelligence service by the Romans was outweighed by diplomatic and military superiority only as long as they were dealing with the disunited tribes in Italy. But once they faced an enemy who himself knew the advantages of good intelligence and used it shrewdly, they were obviously placed in a very unpleasant situation, and this they realized during their prolonged struggle with the Phoenicians of Carthage. The so-called Punic Wars were a hard school in which the Romans learned the importance of intelligence, and they paid for it heavily.

Owing to their frequent commercial intercourse with Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, the Carthaginian Phoenicians—the city of Carthage was founded by the Phoenicians of Tyre in Syria—were well acquainted with all that took place in the Near Eastern countries. They knew of the elaborate information services which had been developed in those lands, and they were shrewd enough to apply for their own benefit the methods used by Near Eastern monarchies. The Carthaginians were daring seafarers and applied the principles of good information service to their foreign trade. They explored the Spanish coast and the west African coast, and founded settlements in modern Senegal and Guinea, in Madeira and the Canary Islands.

Herodotus's *History* (Bk. IV, 196) provides an interesting report on the Carthaginian use of the signal service in their commercial dealings with the natives of the west African coast. When the Carthaginian merchants disembarked, they put up smoke signals to announce their arrival to the natives with whom they wished to exchange their merchandise. The natives replied to the signals and deposited at a certain distance from the sailors the amount of gold they were willing to offer for the merchandise brought by the Carthaginians, and then withdrew. The merchants inspected the gold and, if they judged it to be sufficient, unloaded their merchandise from the vessels. If the quantity of gold was judged to be insufficient, further signals were made until both sides were satisfied, and the transaction concluded.

The Carthaginians jealously guarded their trading monopoly; after establishing themselves in Sardinia and Corsica, their squadrons watched for the vessels of other nations, and seized every ship which ventured into the Mediterranean between Sardinia and the Straits of Gibraltar. They appear to have discovered tin mines in northwestern Spain and guarded their secret so well that the Greeks never learned their location, and thought that the tin came by sea from tiny islands somewhere off the northwestern coast of Spain. Strabo, the geographer of the first century B.C., describes in his *Geography* (Bk. III, 5.11) the method used by the Carthaginians to keep their secret: "In former times it was the Phoenicians alone who carried on this commerce . . . ," for they kept the voyage hidden from everyone else. And when once the Romans were closely following a certain ship-captain in order that they too might learn of the


ATLANTIC OCEAN
TARRACONENSIS
LUSITANIA
SPAIN
BAETICA
Iberus
Douro
Ebro
Guadiana
Salmantica
Numantia
Olisipo
Toletum
Ilerda
Tarraco
Saguntum
Corduba
Castulo
New Carthage
Gades
Malaca
Abdera
Pillars of Hercules
Tingis
PYRENEES
GAUL
Narbo
Massilia
Rhone
THE ALPS
Mediolanum
Po
Verona
Aquileia
Genua
Ravenna
Pisa
Florentia
Tiber
ITALY
APENNINES
Rome
Capua
Pompeii
Brundisium
Tarentum
Rhegium
Messana
Ligurian Sea
CORSICA
Alalia
SARDINIA
Tharrus
Carales
Tyrrhenian Sea
BALEARIC IS
Mago
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SICILY
Motya
Selinus
Agrigentum
Syracuse
Adriatic Sea
ILLYRICUM
PANNONIA
Danube
Sirmium
Salonae
DALMATIA
Narona
Dyrrachium
MACEDONIA
CORCYRA
Epirus
Delphi
Ionian Sea
ACHAIA
Sparta
ATLAS
MTS.
MAURETANIA
GAETULIA
Sitifis
Cirta
Hippo Regius
Carthage
Hadrumentum
Thapsus
Lambaesis
Thamugadi
AFRICA
Lesser Syrtis
NUMIDIA
Oca
Sabrata
Leptis
Greater Syrtis
Cyrene
CYRENAICA
Carthaginian Possessions:
Roman Possessions
0
150
300
Miles

CARTHAGINIAN POSSESSIONS—218 B.C.

markets in question, the ship-captain out of cunning purposely drove his ship from its course into shoal water; after he had lured the followers to the same ruin, he himself escaped by holding on to a piece of wreckage. He received from the state the value of the cargo he had lost. This incident, which impressed the Greeks very much, does indicate that the Carthaginian senate was aware of the value of secrecy in foreign trade relations and jealously watched over the monopoly of important commercial information.

The Carthaginians availed themselves of their knowledge of the Eastern information system for the first time in their warfare in Sicily. There is some evidence that they established a reliable intelligence service from the theater of war in Sicily to the coast of Africa. The author of an essay on strategy—Polyaenus, who lived in the second century of our era—gives us the following data in Book VI, 16.2, of his work:

> When the Carthaginians were devastating Sicily, they made, in order that all they needed would be sent to them quickly from Libya, two water-clocks of the same size, on which they marked circles with appropriate inscriptions. These were the inscriptions: "We need war ships, cargo boats, machines for besieging, foodstuffs, cattle, arms, infantry, cavalry." When they had put these inscriptions on the clocks, they kept one of them in Sicily and the other they sent to Carthage with the following instruction: "They [the Carthaginians] must watch and when they see a fire signal in Sicily, they should let the water flow from the water-clock in Carthage. When they see another fire signal, then they should stop the flowing of water and see which circle it had reached. When they had read the inscription they should send in the quickest way the things they had been asked for by these signals." And so it came about that the Carthaginians were always provided in the most rapid way with what they needed in their warfare.

The system described by Polyaenus resembles in almost every detail that minutely depicted by Aeneas, the first Greek writer on strategy. It is possible that Polyaenus simply copied verbatim from Aeneas. It is also possible, however, that the system described by Aeneas was not invented by him but was known to the Greeks and Carthaginians before his time. Nevertheless, even if it were true that Polyaenus had simply copied the water telegraphic system from Aeneas, it remains evident from his report that the Carthaginians had established, during their invasion of Sicily, a satisfactory system of information service which functioned well across the sea. Further interesting information on Carthaginian military intelligence during the first Punic War is given by Polybius in his *Histories* (Bk. I, 19.6), where he describes how the Carthaginians used fire signals and messengers.

Generally speaking, the Carthaginians must have been regarded by the ancients as past masters in the methods used by intelligence agents and spies. For example, the invention of the clever stratagem of sending secret information by writing on a wooden tablet before it was covered with wax, in order to give the impression that the traveller possessed only a wax tablet for his own use, is ascribed to the Carthaginians by the ancient historian Justin (Bk. XXI, 6.6) who ascribes it to Hamilcar Barcas. In fact, this way of sending secret intelligence might have been known before their time but its invention may have been credited to the Phoenicians from the Syrian coast from whom Carthaginians and Greeks might have learned it. We shall see, however, that Hannibal was familiar with the use of secret signs and symbols, agreed upon beforehand, by which his secret messengers could be recognized as bearing a message from him. Plutarch, moreover, in his *Life of Fabius Maximus* (ch. 19) describes Hannibal's custom of sending forged letters containing false information to mislead his political and military opponents.

This is not all. It seems that the Carthaginians possessed an elaborate system of relays and speedy messengers, at least on the coast, by which the capital was kept informed of any complications that might endanger its security. We find evidence for it again in Livy, who reports (Bk. XXIX, 3.8) that when Laelius had effected the night landing of a Roman army near Hippo in Africa in 205 B.C., the senate of Carthage was informed of this occurrence the very next day. As the distance between Hippo and Carthage is about 250 km., the news could not have reached the capital in so short a time without an elaborate organization of messengers and numerous relays established in advance. We do not know whether this service was a permanent institution, as in Persia, or whether it functioned only during time of war. In any case, the Carthaginians were well aware of the importance of reliable intelligence being rapidly communicated to responsible political authorities.

All forms of fast and shrewd intelligence known to the Carthaginians were developed in the cleverest way by the greatest Punic hero, Hannibal, during the second Punic War. The information service which the Carthaginians had established during their campaign in Sicily must have been extended to Spain when the Carthaginians, under Hamilcar and his son-in-law Hasdrubal had begun its conquest. At least, we learn from the Greek historian Appian that

Hannibal, who succeeded Hasdrubal as commander in Spain after the latter's death, constantly sent messages to the Carthaginian senate endeavoring to acquaint its members with his plan of launching a conflict with Rome. As we gather from the reports of Livy, Appian, and Cornelius Nepos that the Carthaginians were always well informed as to the events in Spain, so we must suppose that they had established a well-organized information service between Spain and Libya, perhaps a combined service of messengers sent both by land and by sea.

From Livy we learn a few interesting details about this service which was probably perfected by Hannibal. When describing the encounter of the Romans with the Carthaginians led by Hasdrubal, Hannibal's brother, Livy discloses how the Roman fleet was sighted by the enemy (Bk. XXII, 19):

> The Spaniards have numerous towers built on heights, which they use both as watch-towers and also for protection against pirates. From one of these the hostile ships were first descried, and on a signal being made to Hasdrubal, the alarm broke out on land and in camp before it reached the sea and the ships; for no one had yet heard the beat of the oars or other nautical sounds, nor had the promontories yet disclosed the fleet to view, when suddenly horsemen, sent off by Hasdrubal, one after another galloped up to the sailors, who were strolling about the beach or resting in their tents and thinking of nothing so little as of the enemy or of fighting on that day, and bade them board their ships in haste and arm themselves, for the Roman fleet was even then close to the harbor.

This rapid transmission of military intelligence saved them from disaster. Be it said that the Romans, in this particular case, owed their own information as to the possibility of a surprise attack to Greek sailors in the service of the city of Marseilles (Massilia), their ally. This intelligence service organized in Spain by the Carthaginians must have greatly impressed the Romans, since Pliny the Elder mentions it in his *Natural History* (Bk. 35, xlviii.169) and ascribes the organization to Hannibal.

Hannibal made full use of this information service. His messengers were faster than the envoys from the Roman Senate who met him under the walls of Saguntum, which had put itself under Roman protection. When the Punic general refused to abandon the siege of the city, the Romans sailed to Carthage with the Saguntine envoys who had come with them from Rome. But, although the Romans held supremacy of the sea at that time, Hannibal's messengers reached Libya before them and still had time before the arrival of the

Roman envoys "so that they might prepare the minds of Hannibal's adherents to prevent the opposing party from affording any satisfaction to the Roman people," as Livy himself reports (Bk. XXI, 9). The Roman envoys appear to have been very poorly informed of the political situation in Carthage, and lost time when they naïvely asked the Carthaginians to deliver Hannibal to them as a violator of the treaty concerning Spain concluded between Rome and Carthage.

The further development of the conflict proved once more how much the Romans lost by neglecting their intelligence service. Immediately after the capture of Saguntum, Hannibal, by peaceful means or by force, subdued most of the Spanish tribes and made preparations to invade Italy from Spain, through Gaul and the Alps. Agents were dispatched to the different tribes of Gaul, and most of them were won over before the Romans had any knowledge of what was happening. According to Appian (Bk. VI, 3.13), Hannibal "sent his agents also to the Alps and caused an examination to be made of the passes of the Alps, which he traversed later"; leaving his brother Hasdrubal in command in Spain, he started his Italian expedition. This prior exploration of the passes through the Alps, also reported by Livy (Bk. XXI, 23) is an interesting detail. We know that the geographical knowledge of the ancients was very poor. Although the Phoenicians were certainly familiar with the coastal areas of Spain and Gaul, their information about the Alpine passes which led from the Rhone Valley in Gaul to the Po Valley in northern Italy was deficient. Hannibal neglected nothing, and, before embarking on this difficult expedition, he endeavored to learn as much as possible about the country his army would cross.

The Punic general kept his preparations for battle so secret that Rome did not even consider the possibility that Italy might become the theater of war between their troops and the Carthaginians. How poor their information service was can be seen from the account given by Livy (Bk. XXI, chs. 19, 20). The Roman Senate instructed its legates, who were returning from Carthage to Spain, to get into touch with the different Spanish and Gallic tribes and to win them over to the Roman cause. But Hannibal's agents had been quicker, and the Roman legates, "Being then bidden straightway to depart out of the borders of the Volciani, they received from that day forth no kinder response from any Spanish council. Accordingly, having traversed that country to no purpose, they passed over into Gaul."

But Hannibal's agents had already done their work in Gaul. Let us read Livy's description of the reception given to the Roman envoys:

> When the envoys, boasting of the renown and valor of the Roman people and the extent of their dominion, requested the Gauls to deny the Phoenician a passage through their lands and cities, if he should attempt to carry the war into Italy, it is said that they burst into such peals of laughter that the magistrates and elders could scarcely reduce the younger men to order, so stupid and impudent a thing it seemed to propose that the Gauls should not suffer the invaders to pass into Italy, but bring down the war on their own heads and offer their own fields to be pillaged in place of other men's.

The envoys' mission to Gaul ended in a complete failure, "nor did they hear a single word of a truly friendly or peaceable tenor until they reached Massilia [Marseilles]." And here the old story was repeated. The Greek colonists of Marseilles, being Roman allies and aware that a victory by the Carthaginians could spell complete ruin for their trade and reduce their city to poverty, tried on their own, and in their own interests, to obtain all possible intelligence as to Hannibal's plans. It was from their allies that the Roman envoys learned the truth, as is reported by Livy: "Here [in Marseilles] they learned of all that had happened from their allies, who had made inquiries with faithful diligence. They reported that Hannibal had been beforehand with the Romans in gaining the good will of the Gauls, but that even he would find them hardly tractable . . . unless from time to time he should make use of gold, of which the race is very covetous, to secure the favor of their principal men."

In the meantime, let us again quote from Appian (Bk. VI, 3.14): "[The Romans, thinking that] Spain and Africa would be the scene of the war—for they never dreamed of an incursion of Africans into Italy—sent . . . 160 ships and two legions into Africa. . . . They also ordered Publius Cornelius Scipio to Spain with sixty ships, 10,000 foot, and 700 horse. . . ." Thus nothing was known in Rome of Hannibal's daring plans. The Roman envoys apparently made no attempt to send to Rome as rapidly as possible the information they had gathered in Gaul and in Marseilles. So it came about that when the envoys reached Rome, the two armies were already on their way to Spain and Africa. "They found," says Livy, "the citizens all on tip-toe with expectation of the war, for the rumor persisted that the Phoenicians had already crossed the Ebro" in Spain. In reality, while these rumors were circulating in Rome, Hannibal had crossed the Pyrenees and was on his way through Gaul to the Alps.

Again it was the Massilian Greeks who proved to be better informed and who transmitted their intelligence to their allies. When Publius Cornelius Scipio reached the harbor of Marseilles with his fleet, he was informed by the Massilian merchants that Hannibal had already crossed the Pyrenees and was about to ford the river Rhone. Publius sent a contingent of his cavalry together with Gallic auxiliaries in the service of the Massilians with the Massilian guides to investigate the situation. According to Livy (Bk. XXI, 29). Hannibal very quickly received intelligence that a Roman army was in Marseilles, and his horsemen, sent to reconnoiter the whereabouts of the Romans, clashed with a Roman detachment. Although the Roman consul would have welcomed a battle with the Phoenicians before the latter crossed the Alps, so as to stop their advance, or at least to weaken the enemy and make him less formidable should he reach Italian soil, Hannibal avoided battle and marched towards the Alps. And here again we find evidence of the insufficiency of Roman intelligence. According to Livy (Bk. XXI, 32), the consul learned of the departure of the Phoenicians towards the Alps only "some three days after Hannibal had left the bank of the Rhone." Unaware of what happened, "he marched in fighting order to the enemy's camp, intending to offer battle without delay. But finding the works deserted, and perceiving that he could not readily overtake the enemy, who had got so long a start ahead of him, he returned to the sea, where he had left his ships." Publius Scipio had good reason to be afraid that Hannibal might take the Romans completely unawares on the other side of the Alps. He knew that no one in Rome expected anything of this sort and that no precautions had been taken. The attitude of the Gauls, mostly friendly to Hannibal, must have given him the impression that the Phoenicians might have come to an understanding also with the Gauls in the Po Valley. He therefore sent his brother with the army to Spain, and himself returned to Pisa, his port of embarkation, in order to alert the Roman troops stationed on the other side of the Apennines.

These details, chosen on purpose, show us more clearly than anything else the inferiority of the Roman intelligence service. The Persians, or the ancient Egyptians, would hardly have been taken so off guard by the sudden invasion of an enemy as were the Romans when Hannibal invaded Italy proper. It is almost incredible that the Romans had not introduced at least the basic methods of transmitting intelligence after their experiences during the first Punic War. According to Livy (Bk. XXI, 33), even the Gauls possessed a kind of signal service and put it into use in order to warn their countrymen and to announce Hannibal's approach. Hannibal, of course, used this kind of signalling, familiar to the Carthaginians, during his campaign. Livy (Bk. XXI, 27.7) and Polybius (Bk. III, 43.6), describing the fording of the Rhone by Hannibal, confess that this kind of signalling worked perfectly. To our surprise we find nothing of this kind on the Roman side.

It seems obvious from Livy's report (Bk. XXVII, chs. 39, 43) that Hannibal, during his prolonged stay in Italy, kept in touch by messenger with his brother Hasdrubal who was fighting the Romans in Spain. Again, an incident which proved fatal to the Carthaginians shows the carelessness of the Romans even when they intercepted the enemy's intelligence in their own country, although they were fighting for their very existence. When Hasdrubal, called by his brother to come to his help in Italy, had crossed the Alps and had abandoned the siege of the city of Placentia, he sent four Gallic horsemen and two Carthaginians with a letter to Hannibal announcing his arrival. The six riders traversed the whole of Italy without difficulty, although they must have been conspicuous as strangers to many. Only the fact that they were not familiar with the roads in southern Italy attracted the attention of Roman soldiers who roamed about the country foraging, and they were brought before the Roman military authorities. Hasdrubal's letter was discovered, saved Rome from a very unpleasant situation, and became one of the causes of Hannibal's final defeat in Italy. Thanks to the interception of this letter, the Romans were able to surprise Hasdrubal and destroy his army. Hannibal learned of this great misfortune only when the Romans sent him the head of his unfortunate brother, slain in the battle.

We learn, again from Livy (Bk. XXIII, chs. 33, 34), of another similar incident which shows once more how slow and awkward the Romans were in learning the secrets of intelligence. Hannibal's initial success in his Italian campaign induced Philip V, King of Macedonia, to listen to the Phoenician's exhortations and to conclude an alliance against Rome, their common enemy. He sent an embassy to Hannibal. These ambassadors reached Italy safely but on their way to Hannibal's camp in southern Italy were intercepted by the Romans near Capua and conducted to a Roman *praetor*. Asked about the object of their journey, they declared impudently and with great emphasis that they were sent by the King of Macedonia to the Roman Senate with warmest greetings and an offer of alliance between Macedonia and Rome against Carthage. The *praetor*, pleased with such a discovery and eager to be useful to the ambassadors and to the Roman Senate, received them with great honor and lavishly provided them with all they needed for their long journey, instructed them which route to take and disclosed to them in detail the position of the Roman and Carthaginian armies. The ambassadors, making use of this information, had no difficulty in reaching Hannibal's camp and of informing Hannibal of Philip's plans. The Phoenician was, of course, delighted and sent them back to Philip with his own proposals. The legates safely reached the vessel which had brought them to Italy and had lain hidden on the coast undiscovered by the Romans, but they were intercepted on the high seas by a Roman squadron. They would have escaped safely even this time. Their explanation seemed quite plausible to the Roman admiral. They said they were on their way to Rome and that, after having left the *praetor*, they were afraid of falling into the hands of the Phoenicians if they continued by land, and therefore were trying to return to Rome by sea. Unfortunately, Hannibal had sent with them two of his own men and it was their Punic appearance which aroused the suspicion of the admiral and brought the whole project to an unhappy end.

Hannibal owed the astounding success of his armies in Italy not only to his military genius, but also to this skillful use and shrewd application of every item of political and military intelligence. He invented a series of new strategies by which he again and again outwitted the Roman generals. He was able to communicate with his sympathizers in Italy behind the backs of the Romans; he had the means of learning the enemy's plans quickly; and the rapidity of his movements was often so astounding that in spite of its final lack of success, his campaign in Italy remains the greatest achievement of military strategy and intelligence in the classical period. It is highly interesting, for example, to read Polybius's account (Bk. VIII, chs. 24–33) of the maneuvers by which Hannibal first kept secret his negotiations with his young sympathizers in the city of Tarentum, then in Roman hands, and by which he directed the occupation of the city without any losses. The whole operation was a triumph of military tactics combined with the shrewdest sense for intelligence. The same can be said of the operations by which he tried to relieve his besieged allies in Capua, and his sudden and absolutely unexpected appearance before the walls of Rome. Polybius's description (Bk. IX, chs. 4–8) of these events is very vivid. The universal panic and consternation which his appearance caused among the population of Rome again bears testimony not so much to the poor state of the Roman intelligence service—although Polybius seems to believe that Rome was taken completely unawares—as to the dread which the name of Hannibal inspired among the Roman populace.

In this case, Rome was not altogether surprised. According to Livy (Bk. XXVI, chs. 8, 9), intelligence of Hannibal's plan was obtained by the besiegers of Capua from deserters and sent to the Senate. Furthermore, a messenger was dispatched from Fregellae by the proconsul Fulvius, who was following Hannibal, to report that the Phoenicians were marching on Rome. The messenger covered the distance from Fregellae to Rome – 100 km. – in one day and night, a remarkable achievement. But Hannibal eluded the enemy, as he took an unexpected route and surprised everyone by the suddenness of his appearance under the walls of Rome. It was Roman stubbornness in refusing to abandon the siege of Capua and the arrival of Fulvius's legion at Rome that spoiled Hannibal's plans.

Livy's report shows that the Romans had begun to learn the importance of rapid intelligence in the hard school of fighting Hannibal, but they made slow progress. At the beginning of the second Punic War, as we have already seen, for example, they relied on the Greeks from Marseilles. Scipio the Elder clearly saw the superiority of the Massilians in this field, and during his Spanish expedition rapid Massilian cruisers rendered the Romans great service in this respect. This is duly acknowledged by Polybius (Bk. III, 95).

The first evidence we have that the Romans had begun to apply the system of relays in signalling military intelligence is found in Livy's account (Bk. XXIV, 46) of the capture of Arpi, in Apulia, in 213 B.C. during the second Punic War, by the consul Fabius. It was the first lesson learned by the Romans from Hannibal.

Another example of the progress made by the Romans is the precautions taken by them in 208 B.C. when their consul Marcellus was defeated by Hannibal and slain in battle. Hannibal took possession of the consul's seal ring. This time the Romans, knowing Hannibal's habit of using forged letters, acted surprisingly fast. According to Livy (Bk. XXVII, 28), the other consul Crispinus "fearing some trickery might be contrived by the Carthaginian through a fraudulent use of that seal, sent word around to the nearest city-states that his colleague had been slain and the enemy was in possession of his ring; that they should not trust any letters written in the name of Marcellus." It was a timely warning, for hardly had this intelligence reached the city of Salapia before a Roman deserter, impersonating the late consul's messenger, brought Hannibal's forged letter sealed with Marcellus's ring, asking the citizens to be ready for the reception of the consul. This timely warning saved the city and brought about the slaying of Roman deserters who preceded Hannibal's army to give the impression that Romans were approaching: they were let into the city and, when the gates were closed, were massacred.

In spite of the progress made by the Romans during the second Punic War in the appreciation and organization of intelligence, they still remained inferior to their teacher for a long time. Hannibal proved superior in this respect until his death. When he had returned to Africa after his unsuccessful campaign in Italy, Carthage achieved a new prosperity under his direction in spite of the ruinous conditions of peace imposed on the city. The Romans, alarmed at this, demanded Hannibal's extradition, but the Phoenician hero made a theatrical escape which was a great feat of planning and shrewd intelligence. It is worth reading the account of this escape as related in Livy (Bk. XXXIII, chs. 47, 48).

The Roman historian cannot hide his admiration for this exploit, and it was an achievement. In one night, on horseback, Hannibal rode about 226 km. to his castle by the sea, probably using the relay system of the state post; in spite of his fatigue, he crossed from there by boat to the island of Cercina. He was able to think fast, to outwit the wily Phoenician merchants in the port, to outdrink their sailors, and to escape secretly during the night.

Hannibal went to Antioch where he was well received by the Seleucid King Antiochus III. The king was hostile to the Romans and listened to Hannibal's plans for a new attack against them with the help of Syrian and Carthaginian forces. Following the king's acquiescence to this plan, Hannibal sent his agent Aristo, a Phoenician from Tyre, with precise instructions, but no written document, to Carthage. This was brilliant, because Aristo, when questioned by the Carthaginian authorities as to whether he had brought any secret letters to Hannibal's friends, could declare in good conscience that he had delivered no written secret document to anyone in Carthage, a statement which could be confirmed again with emphasis by all concerned. But Hannibal, forgetting nothing, disclosed to Aristo some secret signs by which the members of his political party in Carthage would undoubtedly recognize that he enjoyed plenary powers from their leader.

In Carthage, the real purpose of Aristo's mission soon became known in political circles. Although, according to Livy (Bk. XXXIV, 61), Aristo's negotiations with Hannibal's friends lasted for some time and finally led to an official investigation by the authorities, the Romans knowing nothing of what was brewing. If Aristo's mission had been successful, they would have been surprised again, as they seem to have had no secret agents either in Syria or Carthage, although both countries had been recently conquered and were still regarded with great distrust. But the peace-loving party in Carthage won the day and the Carthaginians sent their own embassy to Rome to inform the Senate of the plot that was brewing, at the same time assuring them that Carthage did not wish to have any part of it. The affair was also reported to Rome by Carthage's neighbor and rival, King Masinissa, a Roman ally whose information service in Africa was better than that of the Romans. Roman wrath pursued Hannibal in his exile and finally, in order to escape extradition to his mortal enemies, the great Phoenician hero took poison.

The second Punic War certainly would not have been so costly for the Romans had they learned more quickly the need for a rapid intelligence service. It must be said that the hero—Scipio Africanus the Younger—who played a decisive part in the Roman victory of the third Punic War which definitively sealed the fate of Carthage, made the greatest progress in the art of military and political intelligence. It seems that he had not only profited from the lessons given by Hannibal and the Carthaginians, but also from those of the Greek historian Polybius. During the Roman campaign against Philip V of Macedonia which followed the second Punic War, this Greek became a great admirer of the Romans and later a personal friend of Scipio. He regarded it as his patriotic duty to reconcile his compatriots to the necessity of accepting Roman supremacy. In his historical work he tried to explain that because of its fine constitution, its great moral qualities and military valor, the Roman people was predestined by Fate to rule the world. He studied the Punic Wars in detail, and it was not hard for him to discover the reasons for the initial success of the Carthaginians. He was well acquainted with the organization of the intelligence service in the states created by Alexander's successors, and he had the opportunity of studying on the spot the system used by Philip of Macedon during his campaign in this country on the side of the Romans. In this respect also, as in so many other things, he appears to have been Scipio's teacher.

And Scipio seems to have put into practice what he had learned in this school during his victorious campaign against the Carthaginians in the third Punic War. Polybius may have given him many suggestions in this respect as he accompanied his friend to Africa and together with him witnessed the flames which destroyed the conquered city. How Scipio applied the methods of the old Persian information service to military intelligence we learn from the description of the siege of Numantia (134–133 B.C.), an important city in northern Spain. Polybius was there with his friend under the walls of this city and seems to have described this memorable siege in a work, now lost, which was intended as a supplement to his *Histories*. Fortunately the tactician Appian was so much impressed by the new methods employed by Scipio on this occasion that he appears to have copied its most characteristic features.

We learn from his description (Bk. VI, chs. 90–93) that Scipio combined very cleverly the system of information transmitted by relays, posts, messengers, fire signals, and, during the day, signals by red flags—which replaced smoke signals and were a great improvement—and vocal announcements. The service functioned perfectly; thanks to this highly developed method of military intelligence, all the attempts made by the valiant Spaniards to break through the Roman lines were beaten back and Numantia forced into surrender. We can see in this description all the main elements of the Persian method of rapid transmission of important intelligence here applied to a particular military problem. Only Polybius could have suggested such an idea, as he was well acquainted with the Greek literature which describes the Persian invention.

Although the practical application of the method met with full success and made a great impression on their contemporaries, the Romans failed nevertheless at that time to grasp the whole idea and to apply it to their political intelligence. This is the more curious as the Romans became acquainted, in the second century B.C., with the institutions providing rapid communication of intelligence and made use of them for other purposes. One of these instances is reported by Livy. When in 190 B.C. Scipio Africanus the Elder was planning to strike through Thrace at Antiochus III, the Seleucid king with whom the Romans were at war over the Dardanelles in Asia, he found it became imperative, first of all, to discover the intentions of Philip V of Macedonia. The king was, at that time, on friendly terms with Rome and so far had supported the Romans in their war with Antiochus. With his help the Romans had defeated the Syrian troops in 191 B.C. at Thermopylae and had driven Antiochus from Greece back into Asia Minor. This was also in the interests of Macedonia but it was questionable whether Philip would agree to the passage of Roman troops through his territory. The attack against Antiochus on Asiatic soil could be made only if Philip remained friendly and cooperative. Livy relates (Bk. XXXVII, 7) how this important political and military intelligence was obtained:

> Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, by far the most energetic of the young men at the time, was chosen for this errand and, using relays of horses,

> with almost unbelievable speed, from Amphissa—for he was sent from there—on the third day reached Pella. The king was at a banquet and had gone far with his drinking; this very cheerfulness of mind relieved all anxiety that Philip planned to make any new trouble. And at that time the guest was graciously welcomed, and the next day he saw supplies in abundance prepared for the army, bridges built over the rivers, roads constructed where travel was difficult. Taking back this information with the same speed as on his journey thither, he met the consul at Thaumaci. From there the army, rejoicing to find its hopes surer and greater, reached Macedonia where everything was in readiness.

It is evident that, in this case, the young Roman messenger availed himself of the relay service instituted by the King of Macedonia. As he was an envoy to the king in a diplomatic affair, Macedonian authorities put the royal service at his disposal. Pella was the king's residence, and Amphissa was situated near Thermopylae. The Romans must have been impressed by this service and, according to Livy, they admired its rapidity. But it seems that the Roman envoy did not travel with unusual speed. The distance of about 201 km. could be covered easily in three days with average speed as travelled by the Macedonian messengers when delivering routine intelligence. In spite of all this, we hear of no attempt on the part of the Romans to introduce anything similar under the Republic.

This is the more astonishing as there were statesmen in Rome who had fully grasped the importance of a reliable and speedy intelligence service in the conduct of state affairs. The most prominent among them, besides Scipio the Younger, was the celebrated Cato the Elder. This stern, energetic, and intelligent statesman was in some ways the incarnation of the old Roman Republican spirit, a valiant defender of Roman national traditions and an uncompromising opponent of the encroachment of the Greek culture on Roman and Latin intellectual life. But this Roman "isolationist" in cultural traditions was both an intelligent statesman and a good general, and he understood the importance of a rapid information service; he proved it himself upon one occasion. He was with the Roman army when campaigning against Antiochus in Greece and seems to have contributed by a courageous act of military intelligence to the great victory won at Thermopylae. The Roman Senate was following with anxiety the outcome of this encounter. Cato realized that it would be of great value, for his own political career as well, if he were able to inform the Senate as quickly as possible as to what occurred. Livy reports (Bk. XXXVI, 21) how he accomplished this, and the report is interesting because it also gives us indications of the manner in which communications between Greece and Italy were made:

> . . . the consul sent Marcus Cato to Rome, that from him, a thoroughly trustworthy source, the Senate and the Roman people might learn what had happened. From Creusa—this is the trading port of the Thespians, lying deep in the Corinthian Gulf—he made for Patrae in Achaea; from Patrae he skirted the shores of Aetolia and Arcanania right up to Corcyra and thence crossed to Hydruntum in Italy. On the fifth day from there in hurried progress by land he arrived in Rome. Entering the City before daybreak he went from the gate straight to the praetor Marcus Junius. Junius at daybreak summoned the Senate; Lucius Cornelius Scipio, who had been sent some days before by the consul, learning upon his arrival that Cato had reached there first and was in the Senate, came in while he was recounting what had happened.

This report is confirmed in the main by Plutarch in his *Life of Cato the Elder* (ch. 14), except that he gives another route by sea to Brundisium (Brindisi), instead of Hydruntum, from which Cato went in one day to Tarentum, reaching Rome in four days. From Livy's account it is clear that Cato succeeded in arriving before the official messenger—it may not have been Cornelius Scipio—and deserved the distinction of being the first to report to the Senate.

Cato, as we shall see presently, also proved his interest in a better organization of the information service upon another occasion. Although we have seen that the principle of a good, rapid information service was appreciated by several prominent Roman statesmen during the Republican period, they were unable to overcome the apathy of the Senate and induce them to organize such a service in a more systematic way.

The envoys and messengers of the Senate were still using the old-fashioned system of requisitioning horses and other necessities for travelling in the cities through which they passed and which were Roman subjects or allies. The existence of this custom is evidenced by Cato's report on his activity as *praetor* in Sardinia in 198 B.C., in one of his orations, preserved only in fragments (fragment II). He stresses that he never gave any such permission for the requisitioning of horses for travelling (he calls it *evectio*) to his friends for private purposes. This indicates that this custom must have been in force in Rome for a long period, and that it was sometimes abused by Republican officials for private purposes as well as for commercial and other journeys of their friends. This means of transporting information was certainly not as rapid as the system used in the East. Requisitioning of horses and vehicles undoubtedly slowed down the journey of the officials concerned and was a burden on the cities and provinces, the more so as the *evectio* was often misused for private and lucrative purposes both by officials and their protégés.

Cato's activity in Sardinia is mentioned also by Livy (Bk. XXXII, 27, of his *History*), who says that during Cato's administration "the expenses which the allies were accustomed to incur for the comfort of the *praetors* were cut down or abolished." By this Livy completes what Cato himself says. Livy's report thus presents another piece of evidence confirming the fact that the Romans simply imposed upon their allies the burden of providing expenses for the information service of the Republic.

In another passage, Livy (Bk. XLII, 1) discloses additional details as to the origins of this custom and the manner in which this obligation became more and more onerous for both provinces and allies. When relating how Consul Postumius became angry in 178 B.C. at the allied city of Praeneste because it did nothing to facilitate his private voyage through its territory, Livy says, ". . . before he set out from Rome [he] sent a message to Praeneste to the effect that the magistrate should come out to meet him, that they should engage at public expense quarters for his entertainment, and that when he should leave there transport-animals should be in readiness. Before his consulship no one had ever put the allies to any trouble or expense in any respect." Here Livy seems to exaggerate, because he himself mentions elsewhere, as we have seen, that the allies were expected to facilitate official voyages of the Republican magistrates. Then Livy explains how, at the beginning of the Republic, the state provided the magistrates with all things necessary for their official voyage, or—if we may rightly add—messengers sent out for necessary information:

> Magistrates were supplied with mules and tents and all other military equipment, precisely in order that they might not give any such command [as did Postumius] to the allies. The senators generally had private relations of hospitality, which they generously and courteously cultivated, and their homes at Rome were open to the guests at whose houses they themselves were wont to lodge. Ambassadors who were sent on short notice to any place would call upon the towns through which their route took them, for one pack-animal each; no other expense did the allies incur in behalf of Roman officials. The anger of the consul, even if it was justifiable, should nevertheless not have found vent while he was in office, and

> its silent acceptance by Praenestines, whether too modest or too fearful, established, as by an approved precedent, the right of magistrates to make demands of this sort, which grew more and more burdensome day by day.

Livy is right in relating how oppressive this service had become. He probably had in mind an abuse which had spread long before his time, which consisted in the Senate's giving to some of its members from time to time a privilege of so-called free embassy—*legatio libera*—by virtue of which they were entitled to request from the allies every facility for their voyage, even when undertaken only for private reasons. It is important to bear in mind this custom dating from the Republican period, as it became the basis of the further development of the official information service during the imperial period.

The Roman Senate found many opportunities to discover the unsatisfactory nature of this method of transporting embassies which were often the bearers of important intelligence. Much valuable time was lost in requisitioning, and more than once the embassies were late. Two incidents may be quoted which took place during the last Macedonian war with Philip V's son, Perseus. Livy (Bk. XLIV, chs. 19, 20) reports that in March 168 B.C. the Senate awaited anxiously the return of a Roman embassy from Macedonia. Much depended on the nature of the intelligence they were bringing. They were not fortunate, however, for the stormy wind had forced them twice to turn back to Durazzo. At last they reached Brindisi on the Italian coast, but their journey from there to Rome lasted eight days. They could have done it easily in five.

The official delegation bringing the news of the final victory over Perseus at Pydna, won in September of the same year, took exactly three weeks to make the journey from Macedonia to Rome (Livy, Bk. XLIV, 45), although the unofficial announcement reached Rome in twelve days and was regarded as a record in rapid intelligence. But, from the subsequent book of Livy's *History*, we gather that the intelligence of this victory had been transmitted to Africa sooner than to Rome. A few days after the news had reached Rome, the son of Masinissa, a Roman ally in Africa, came with congratulations from his father. The latter was able to give this instruction to his son by a special messenger who reached him just at the very moment he was embarking for Rome. This is another illustration of the slowness of Roman intelligence and of the superiority of the Africans in this respect.

For the transport of official letters containing information for the Senate and the magistrates in Rome, the magistrates in the provinces were bound to use special messengers called *statores*, who were attached to their bureaus. We have very little evidence as to their functions, how they discharged their duties, or when they were first employed. But from the way in which Cicero, who in 51 B.C. was proconsul of Cilicia in Asia Minor, speaks of them in the letters written during the tenure of his office, we can conclude, however, that they must have existed for a considerable period and that their main function was to act as carriers of official information to Rome and to the magistrates of other provinces.

In the offices of the central magistrates the function of the provincial *statores* was occupied by the *tabellarii*, or letter bearers. These should be distinguished from the *tabellarii* employed by the *publicani* or tax collectors, whose letter bearers also exercised the function of modern tax collectors, and from letter bearers who were employed by private people, or who hired themselves out to individuals unable to afford their own letter bearer.

The letter bearers in official or private service were mostly slaves. They performed their duty on foot and, naturally, were expected to deliver the letters as quickly as possible. It seems to have been a hard job, making great demands on the physical endurance of the individual; and there was certainly no competition among the slaves for this doubtful honor. It is characteristic that the tribes which had supported Hannibal during his Italian campaign were, after their submission, as we read in Strabo's *Geography* (Bk. V, 4.13), "appointed to serve the state as couriers and letter-carriers." This was regarded as a punishment, a degradation from the military service in which they were engaged before their revolt, to the humble and difficult service of *tabellarii*. It seems strange that in the third century B.C., after the second Punic War, the information service was so little valued in Rome that to serve as *tabellarius* was regarded as degrading. On the other hand, this particular instance can be cited as proof that in the third century B.C. the need for numerous messengers to transport information from Sicily to Rome and back had increased considerably.

It seems, however, that this special class of Roman "civil servant" was slowly rising in the estimation of the Romans. It was realized that, besides physical capacity, certain moral and intellectual qualities were required of a good *tabellarius*, as the outcome of important political and military measures often depended upon the intelligent fulfillment of his mission. We notice, therefore, that slaves or freedmen belonging to races regarded as intelligent, such as the Phoenicians, Greeks, Illyrians, and Gauls, were chosen for this function. Perhaps they acquired, at the end of this evolution, a kind of uniform. At least, in one of his letters (letter XV, 17.1) Cicero calls them *petaseti*, which expression seems to correspond to the Greek word *pterophoroi* which we find in Plutarch's biography of Otho (ch. 4.1). This could indicate that the messengers wore feathers in their hats to identify themselves with Hermes, the divine messenger whose disciples and protégés they pretended to be. This would be quite suitable, as the speed reached by seasoned messengers was rather remarkable. From the study of Cicero's rich correspondence, in which we often find meticulous details about the date a letter was expected or received, the average daily performance of a private *tabellarius* could be about 60–75 km. (37–47 miles).

We may suppose that the state *tabellarii* and the provincial *statores* were expected to give similar performances. But this is all; there is no trace, during the Republican period, of any organized information service.

The roads which the Romans had built were intended primarily for expediting the movement of troops. The messengers were bound to use them, of course, but no special provisions were made to facilitate their travel on the military roads, although their duties were important to the administration and for the security of the provinces as well as the whole state. In the second century B.C. there is only one instance which seems to suggest that a kind of postal and information service on the eastern model was developing. A Latin inscription from 132 B.C., commemorating the building of a road from Regia to Capua, discloses that the magistrate who supervised the construction had put on the road not only milestones, indicating the distances, but also the *tabeliarii*. This wording was interpreted by A. M. Ramsay as evidence for the existence of a kind of postal service during the period of the Roman Republic. This, however, seems unproven. The evidence is too scanty, and one may rightly question the assumption that the word *tabellarii* used here in connection with *miliarii*, or milestone, and placed, so to speak, on the same footing, means in this context, messenger. It could be taken as a synonym of *miliarii* and mean an older kind of milestone, in the form of a tablet—*tabula*—on which written indications were placed. But, as the road was intended for military purposes, it would perhaps be more indicative to see in this special case the practical application of what Strabo had said about the degradation of some southern Italian tribes to *tabellarii*. The consul who constructed the road opened it also to state messengers travelling from Rome to Sicily. The use of the *tabellarii* on the road, like its very construction, would have a military purpose. We cannot conclude from this slender evidence that the Romans had, during the Republican period, organized a postal information service, of the eastern type, in order to provide a more rapid transmission of intelligence.

2. Period of Civil Wars

A new period in the history of the Roman intelligence service opens towards the end of the Republic. In the first century B.C., Roman power had reached an unheard-of expansion on all sides. At that time Rome was already well on the way to world domination. Not only was Roman power firmly implanted in North Africa, Spain, and Gaul, but in the East Roman legions had advanced far on the road traced some centuries before by Alexander the Great. The protracted conflict with the Macedonians, under their kings Philip V and his son Perseus, ended finally in 168 B.C. with the destruction of the Macedonian Empire, the establishment of the Roman province of Macedonia, the extension of Roman influence over the Greek city-states federated in the so-called Athenian League, and finally in the complete submission of Greece. In Asia, the conflict with Antiochus III, former ally of Philip V and Hannibal, ended in the destruction of the Seleucid empire and the creation of two Roman provinces, that of Asia (129–126 B.C.) and that of Bithynia (74 B.C.). The conquest of the East was completed by the subjection of Syria in 64 B.C. and of Egypt in 30 B.C.

During the negotiations and fighting with the Macedonians and the easterners, the Romans had the opportunity of obtaining first-hand knowledge of the different systems of information services which had been established in Macedonia and the Eastern empires. With the advance of Roman troops conditions had changed and opportunities for a better information service were improved. The conquered lands were soon swarming with Roman merchants, land speculators, tax collectors, and agents of Roman financial magnates. It was, naturally, in their own interests to be well informed of the political situation in conquered or befriended lands and to report to the provincial magistrates any dangerous move likely to imperil their own and Roman interests.

That Roman traders might be at the same time intelligence agents was fully realized by the neighbors of Rome. Even in the early period, in 492–491 B.C., Roman buyers of corn from the southern

Italian tribes and from Sicily were suspected of being spies, treated with extreme caution, and were even in great danger of their lives, as is reported by the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Bk. VII, 2) and partly confirmed by Livy (Bk. II, 34). The Carthaginians were also very well aware of the fact that Roman merchants could be the most dangerous agents of Roman intelligence. Therefore, when concluding their peace treaties with Rome after the first and second Punic Wars, they took great precautions to eliminate such a danger. According to Polybius's description (Bk. III, 22 ff.) of these first treaties, they contained a clause that sales could be concluded only "in the presence of a herald or town-clerk, and the price of whatever is sold in the presence of such shall be secured to the vendor by the state, if the sale takes place in Libya or Sardinia." The presence of Roman traders beyond the Fair Promontory in Libya was not allowed. The second treaty was even more explicit: "No Roman shall . . . trade or found a city in Sardinia and Libya or remain in a Sardinian or Libyan port longer than is required for taking in provisions or repairing his ship. If he be driven there by stress of weather, he shall depart within five days. In the Carthaginian province of Sicily and at Carthage he may do and sell anything that is permitted to a citizen. A Carthaginian in Rome may do likewise." The wording is interesting. It is clear that the Carthaginians, always well aware of the importance of intelligence, were doing their utmost to prevent the Romans from sending their agents into their country under the guise of traders. But, on the other hand, they succeeded in opening up to their own merchants and disguised agents free access to the Roman market.

The conquests in Asia Minor seem, more than any others, to have stirred Roman financiers, merchants, and speculators. The fabulous riches of the eastern empires attracted them, but in Asia Minor the situation was particularly delicate and tense. Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, the greatest enemy of Rome in the East, was disputing their conquests in Asia with considerable success. Again, following the example of ancient Persia from whence his ancestors came, not only did he count on a good fighting force in this struggle but also on good intelligence. He must have had his agents in Rome because he was always well informed as to the political situation in the city, at that time in the throes of civil war between the aristocratic and democratic parties. He learned of the sad fate of one of the best men Republican Rome had produced—Sertorius. A convinced but moderate democrat, Sertorius had proved that he possessed the highest qualities of an excellent general and a skillful diplomat. But he was politically out-maneuvered in Rome by Sulla, who later became the leader of the aristocratic party. Sertorius was sent to Spain, where he continued fighting against the armies of his political opponents. He continued this struggle even after the democrats were ousted from power in Rome. Invited by the Lusitanians, a mighty Iberian tribe living in modern Portugal, to join them, he became their leader in the struggle with the armies sent by the new masters of Rome, his political opponents.

In spite of this, he remained an ardent Roman patriot and a convinced republican. His intention seems to have been to found an Ibero-Roman state in Spain, to conquer Italy and Rome from there, and restore democratic principles in Rome. Like Cato and Scipio he valued the importance of good intelligence and proved it when, at the beginning of his military career, fighting the Teutons who had invaded Gaul, he himself undertook "to spy out the enemy," as Plutarch says in his biography of Sertorius (ch. 3). "So putting on Celtic dress and acquiring the commonest expressions of that language for such conversation as might be necessary, he mingled with the barbarians; and after seeing or hearing what was necessary, he came back." This deed was so uncommon among the Romans that for it "he received a prize for valor."

It may have been the pirates of the Cilician coast in Asia Minor who divulged the deeds of Sertorius in the East, as Sertorius was in touch with them, their fleet being at that time more powerful than that of the Republic, which had been greatly neglected during the civil wars. At least, this is suggested by a passage in his biography by Plutarch (ch. 23), where it is stated that "sailors from the west had filled the kingdom of Pontus full of tales about Sertorius, like so many foreign wares." Mithridates decided to approach him and offer an alliance against the victorious party ruling in Rome, and an animated correspondence developed between the two men. We learn from Cicero's second oration against Verres (chs. 86, 87) how these communications were transmitted. Verres was the most corrupt man of the period. His plundering of the provinces of Asia Minor which he had administered for several years caused great scandal in Republican Rome, accustomed though it was to such ugly affairs. It appears that Verres extorted from the city of Miletus not only valuable merchandise and costly entertainment, but, also, under the pretext of the right to the *evectio* in official voyage, one of their best cruisers for his journey to Myndus. Upon his arrival, instead of returning the cruiser, he ordered the sailors to return by land to their city and sold the cruiser to two intelligence agents entrusted by Mithridates with carrying messages to Spain. The Miletians were famous for the solidity and swiftness of their naval constructions; they needed such vessels for their dangerous mission and were willing to pay the price.

We learn further from Appian's description of the wars with Mithridates (Bk. XII, chs. 26, 79) that the king made frequent use of fire signals and of advanced posts signalling intelligence by relays on the movement of enemy troops. How well Mithridates controlled the highly efficient intelligence service in his lands was demonstrated by the massacres of Roman merchants and other Roman citizens who entered Asia Minor for business and other purposes. Mithridates, well informed about the endless dissensions in Rome and the progress of the civil war, chose his moment well for the subordination of the whole of Asia Minor to his rule. Well acquainted with the activities of the Roman citizens in the country, and aware of their unpopularity among the native populace, he decided, first of all, to rid himself on one day of all possible fifth columnists who feigned friendship with him, and who at the same time would send intelligence to the enemy to sabotage his war plans.

He made his arrangements thoroughly and with oriental cruelty, as Appian (Bk. XII, 22) describes it:

> Mithridates . . . wrote secretly to all his satraps and city governors that on the thirtieth day thereafter they should set upon all Romans and Italians in their towns, and upon their wives and children and their freedmen of Italian birth, kill them and throw their bodies out unburied. . . . He threatened to punish any who should bury the dead or conceal the living, and proclaimed rewards to informers and to those who should kill persons in hiding. To slaves who killed or betrayed their masters he offered freedom, to debtors, who did the same thing to their creditors, the remission of half their debt. These secret orders Mithridates sent to all the cities at the same time. When the appointed day came disasters of the most varied kinds occurred throughout Asia. . . .

Appian then goes on to describe the frightful scenes which were witnessed in the main cities of Asia Minor. This happened in 88 B.C. The number of Romans killed on one day is estimated at eighty thousand to one hundred thousand people.

When in 66 B.C., after long years of wars in Asia Minor with varying degrees of success, the people demanded that the liquidation of the worst enemy of the Romans in Asia be entrusted to Pompey, the new star in the political and military firmament of Rome, Cicero pronounced his famous speech in the Senate on the "Appointment of Gnaeus Pompeius." Cicero (ch. 3) described this massacre in the following words, which express at the same time the admiration felt by Romans for the efficiency of the eastern intelligence service:

> I call upon you to wipe out that stain incurred in the first Mithridatic war, which is now so deeply ingrained and has so long been left upon the honor of the Roman people; in that he who, *upon a single day throughout the whole of Asia and in many states, by a single message and by one dispatch* marked out our citizens for butchery and slaughter, has hitherto not only failed to pay any penalty adequate to his crime but has remained on the throne for two and twenty years from that date.

This speech is interesting also in another respect. In the preceding chapter Cicero testifies that the massacre of so many Roman merchants and agents did not deter others from venturing into the land which at that time was regarded in Rome as fabulously rich. Scarcely had the Romans reconquered some of the Asiatic provinces than new crowds of traders, speculators, and publicans (tax collectors) settled there. It was these men who gathered their own intelligence on the plans of Mithridates who, at that time, was in alliance with the Armenian King Tigranes. Because it was in their own interests, they also found ways to transmit their information to Rome. In numerous letters to their representatives and senators they pressed for decisive action. Here is Cicero's exclamation:

> Every day letters arrive from Asia for my good friends the Roman knights who are concerned for the great sums they have invested in the farming of your revenues; on the strength of my close connection with that order they have represented to me the position of the public interests and the danger of their private fortunes.

And then Cicero goes on to enumerate the news sent from Asia by the agents of Roman financial speculators and tax farmers. All the political and military intelligence was transmitted to Rome by private letter-bearers on private expense accounts. In some of his letters Cicero praises the reliability of this private post; when he was in Asia Minor as proconsul administering Cilicia, he advised his brother Atticus (Bk. V, letter 15) to use the private post of the tax collectors when sending him political news from Rome.

Cicero's letters to his friends during his administration of Cilicia in Asia Minor give us, at the same time, a clear picture of how the governors of the provinces gathered their intelligence. In this respect the most informative is Cicero's first letter of the fifteenth book, in which he warns his friends, the consuls, and the Senate of the possible danger threatening Cilicia and Syria from the Parthians, who seemed about to invade Roman territory. Again we learn that the most trustworthy intelligence came from the Roman allies whose national interests would be endangered by invasion from hostile troops. In Cicero's case it was the King of Commagene, the northeasterly district of Syria, and King Deiotarus, the principal chief of the Celtic tribes that had invaded Asia Minor in the third century B.C., to settle in the heart of the peninsula in the land which, since then, has been called Galatia after the Gauls. This king had rendered valuable services to the Romans during their struggle with Mithridates. He combined an alert Gallic intelligence with oriental shrewdness and, during the Mithridatic Wars, was the main intelligence agent of the Romans. For his services he was rewarded, after the liquidation of Mithridates by Pompey (66 B.C.), with a grant of territory and the title of King of Armenia Minor. He continued to play the same role against the Parthians during Cicero's tenure of office in Cilicia.

We can infer from all this that in the organization of rapid intelligence service very slow progress was made during the last period of the Roman Republic. In the conquered provinces the Romans still relied mainly on the services of their allies, who were more or less politically important and reliable. But this policy of making allies when advancing against a powerful enemy rendered enormous service to the Romans, helped them to disguise their advance, and made their wars less costly. In this period, a new factor entered into the evolution of Roman intelligence service, that of private enterprise on the part of Roman financial speculators, exporters, and traders. We have seen that, especially during the Mithridatic Wars in Asia Minor, the Roman intelligence service was financed by private citizens who were, in this respect, in advance of the State as such and were protecting by their own means, and on their own initiative, both their interests and those of the State, at the risk of their lives. It is an interesting phenomenon showing how, in a democracy, private citizens take the initiative and further their country's interests because they see that they are identical with their own.

The case is the more instructive as we observe how these private citizens, businessmen, financiers, and colonists, through frequent intervention in Rome, tried and succeeded in moving the Senate to take important political action. From Cicero's speech in favor of Pompey's military leadership in Asia, we may infer that the letters and information of the self-appointed intelligence agents in Asia

Minor were ultimately responsible for the sending of Pompey to Asia, the liquidation of Mithridates, and the firm implanting of Roman power in Asia Minor, from which it could extend over Armenia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

Unfortunately, the transmission of information from provinces overseas was greatly handicapped during the civil wars by the insecurity of sea travel. The Romans had destroyed the sea power of the Carthaginians, but were slow in building up their own and in taking the responsibility for making secure the Mediterranean sea routes. At the same time, the decline of the empires of the Seleucids in Syria and Asia Minor, and of the Ptolemies in Egypt, each previously commanding an important and well-organized navy, resulted in the relaxation of control over navigation in the Aegean Sea. These circumstances were exploited by numerous adventurers, and piracy flourished. The pirates on the Cilician coast of Asia Minor were the most daring and the most dangerous and, as we have seen, had political ambitions as well, as they had cooperated for some time with Sertorius in Spain. Of course, Mithridates was on friendly terms with them and enjoyed their help in his anti-Roman campaigns. So it happened that the transmission of messages from Asia Minor to Rome was considerably slowed down during this whole period. We learn from Cicero's voluminous correspondence from Cilicia that letters, which normally should have reached Rome in a fortnight, took fifty days. In his speech on the "Appointment of Gnaeus Pompeius," Cicero (chs. 11, 12, 17) depicts the insecurity of the seas during the civil wars. According to him, Roman envoys, *quaestors*, and *praetors* were taken prisoner by the pirates, an experience suffered even by Caesar in his earlier years, and army transports dared venture on the seas only during the winter, the most dangerous season for navigation. Rome was "barred from communication both private and public with any one of its provinces." The situation was often so bad that, in Cicero's words, "we were actually unable to transact either our private or our public business overseas." This situation was remedied by Pompey, who put an end to piracy on all the seas and secured the sea routes once more. It is remarkable—and this is the shady side of the struggle between political parties ending in bloodshed—that the only political information which travelled with extreme rapidity through the empire during the civil wars was the news of alliances formed by prominent political opponents.

But, although Pompey was mainly responsible for reopening the seas to more secure traffic, a circumstance which was of importance in the transmission of information, he did nothing about the reorganization of the Roman intelligence service. In this respect his political rival Caesar had more foresight. Caesar certainly owed his great military success not only to his extraordinary generalship but also to his understanding of the importance of a good intelligence service. Before embarking on any of his enterprises, Caesar first did his utmost to obtain the best information he could about the country in which he was to operate, the customs of the people living there, their political institutions, their history, and their economic situation. He had a keen sense of the importance of political and military intelligence, as well as of geographical and economic intelligence. We have only to open the first book of his history of the Gallic Wars. He begins by recounting all that he had learned of the geography and ethnography of Gaul and comes afterward to the "modern" history of Gallic tribes. His knowledge of this enabled him to take his first military measures as rapidly as possible against the migration of the Helvetii from modern Switzerland into Roman Gaul.

In Book IV of *Gallic War* Caesar again relates to us all that his intelligence agents had gathered about the situation on the other side of the Rhine, among the German tribes. It is astonishing to see how this seasoned soldier was able to estimate the military valor of his enemy. He studied their habits, their food, their simple life, their clothing, and, from all these observations, was able to size up the sturdy endurance of the German fighting man. His phrases are short, terse, concise, crisp, but we can see clearly that they represent the results of a long study, and that they give evidence of a great talent for keen observation. Caesar's appraisal of the German cavalry reads like a description of an attack by Red Indians riding their ponies against the white settlers at the time of the American "Wild West." Caesar began the exploration of Germany and of Gaul, and the results of his geographical, anthropological, political, and economic intelligence on these countries, although later proved inaccurate in some details, constitute an important contribution to the early history of those countries.

But Caesar's interest did not stop there. After the conquest of Gaul he began to prepare for the conquest of Britain and again, as a preliminary, he gathered all the available intelligence concerning this country before embarking on the expedition. This country was almost unknown to the Romans. If we can give credit to Plutarch's words in chapter 23 of his *Life of Caesar*, geographical knowledge concerning the more northerly countries must have been very poor in Rome in Caesar's time. Plutarch says, "The island was of incredible magnitude and furnished much in the way of dispute to a multitude of writers, some of whom averred that its name and story had been fabricated, since it had never existed and did not exist then."

Caesar had learned during his campaigns in Gaul not only that this country really existed, but that it spelled danger to Roman interests in Gaul, because military help was often sent to the Celts in Gaul by the Celts in Britain. Let us quote Caesar's own words—speaking in the third person—of the ways by which he tried to obtain reliable intelligence about this mysterious country. In chapter 20 of Book IV of his *Gallic War* we read:

> Only a small part of the summer was left, and in these regions, as all Gaul has a northerly aspect, the winters are early; but for all this Caesar was intent upon starting for Britain. He understood that in almost all the Gallic campaigns succor had been furnished for our enemy from that quarter; and he supposed that, if the season left no time for actual campaigning, it would still be of great advantage to him merely to have entered the island, observed the character of the natives, and obtained some knowledge of the localities, the harbors, and the landing-places; for almost all these matters were unknown to the Gauls. In fact, nobody except traders journey thither without good cause; and even traders know nothing except the sea coast and the district opposite Gaul. Therefore, although he summoned to his quarters traders from all parts, he could discover neither the size of the island, nor the number or the strength of the tribes inhabiting it, nor their manner of warfare, nor the ordinances they observed, nor the harbors suitable for a number of large ships.

In order to explore the island, Caesar first sent an officer, probably to find a suitable landing place. His intention of invading Britain became known in the meantime through the intermediary of the traders whom he had so thoroughly questioned. Caesar might have counted upon this possibility. He seems, however, to have impressed the traders in such a manner that they unwittingly became his agents among the natives. He reports that after the traders had divulged his intention in Britain, ". . . deputies came to him from several states in the island with promises to give hostages and to accept the empire of Rome." He profited from this opportunity and sent with them to Britain a chief of one of the Gallic tribes, loyal to Rome, and ". . . his influence was reckoned to be of great account in those parts." We gather from Caesar's description that his first expedition to Britain had for its main object a first-hand exploration of the country for possible future action, because it was so difficult to obtain reliable intelligence on the country and its inhabitants.

Besides this direct method, Caesar during his campaigns in Gaul utilized the old method so familiar to the Romans, namely, intelligence with the help of the allies. We can quote two particular cases of this kind: of information received from one Belgian tribe which joined him (*Gallic War*, Bk. II, 3), and, during his renewed campaign in Britain, intelligence received from some friendly British tribes (Bk. V, 21).

Caesar also followed his own method of direct intelligence during the civil war against his former ally, Pompey. We read in his history of the Civil Wars (Bk. I, 38 ff.) how he gathered information on the forces of the enemy in Spain and then again (Bk. III, 3 ff.) on the mobilization carried out by Pompey in Greece and Asia. The latter report is particularly detailed and presents an impressive picture of Caesar's ability to gather reliable information about the military strength of the enemy and his financial resources.

The fighting in Gaul was not easy. The Gauls, as we have seen, were not only daring warriors, but also possessed a good basic knowledge of the importance of intelligence service in warfare. Caesar was well aware of this. He himself increases our knowledge of Gallic intelligence service when reporting how they were accustomed to gather their information (Bk. IV, 5): "It is indeed a regular habit of the Gauls to compel travellers to halt, even against their will, and to ascertain what each of them may have heard or learnt upon every subject; and in the towns the common folk surround the traders compelling them to declare from what districts they come and what they have learned there." This common curiosity was often dangerous, continues Caesar, as conflicting rumors spread in this way and caused panic among the people. Therefore the magistrates of better-organized tribes were compelled to take measures accordingly in order to control the spread of information. Caesar describes these measures in the following way (Bk. VI, 20):

[illegible]

> Those states which are supposed to conduct their public administration to greater advantage have it prescribed by law that anyone who has learned anything of public concern from his neighbors by rumor or report must bring the information to a magistrate and not impart it to anyone else; for it is recognized that oftentimes hasty and inexperienced men are terrified by false rumors and so are driven to crime or to decide supreme issues. Magistrates conceal what they choose, and make known what they think proper for the public. Speech on state questions, except by means of an assembly, is not allowed.

This was certainly a remarkable achievement of an attempt at official control of information and at the monopolization of intelligence in the hands of the magistrates. It is rather surprising to find, in the first century B.C. in Gaul, the basic elements of institutions which earned a doubtful fame and which flourish in the middle of the twentieth century—the ministries of information, the most powerful organs for controlling and influencing public opinion in despotic states.

Gallic military intelligence must have succeeded quite well also, for Caesar himself mentions how, in some instances, his operations were hampered by the enemy's spies and military intelligence agents (Bk. V, 49; Bk. VI, 7; Bk. VII, chs. 18, 61). The Germanic Suebi (Bk. IV, 19) had their own scouts and messengers charged to transmit rapidly to all tribesmen the order of "mobilization" decided upon by their chiefs. It was therefore often a war of wits. Caesar adapted himself quickly to the situation and, as we can see from his description, made use of spies and military intelligence agents on a scale unusual at that time in Roman warfare. He proved superior to his enemies and won.

Caesar was also a man who appreciated the importance of swiftness and rapidity of movement. He moved his armies with an astonishing speed which became proverbial in Rome and which is another secret of his military prowess. He was indefatigable in spite of delicate health. He worked and slept in his carriage while campaigning. Plutarch, in his biography of Caesar (ch. 17), is full of admiration for his endurance and speed of travel:

> Most of his sleep, at least, he got in cars or litters, making his rest conduce to action, and in the daytime he would have himself conveyed to garrisons, cities, or camps, one slave who was accustomed to write from dictation as he travelled sitting by his side, and one soldier standing behind him with a sword. And he drove so rapidly that, on his first journey from Rome to Gaul he reached the Rhone in seven days. . . . And in the Gallic campaigns he practised dictating letters on horseback and keeping two scribes at once busy, or . . . even more.

Suetonius in his *Life of the Caesars* (Bk. I, 57) also praises his astonishing rapidity: "He covered great distances with incredible speed, making a hundred miles (150 km.) a day in a hired carriage and with little baggage, swimming the rivers which barred his path or crossing them on inflated skins, and very often arriving before the messengers sent to announce his coming."

Such a man was certainly appreciative of a rapid information service and can be expected to have tried to reorganize the Roman intelligence service. But it was not easy to break the old habits. As we have seen from the passage quoted from Suetonius, since there was no state post, Caesar made use of private carriages on his journeys, hired from enterprising citizens who made it a profitable business to supply such equipment to private travellers. And again, as we have seen from Plutarch's and Suetonius's descriptions of Caesar's journeyings, he was able to obtain the greatest amount of efficiency in his private enterprises. This means of transport also served him, as we learn from Plutarch (ch. 32), on his fateful journey from Ravenna to the river Rubicon which, at that time, formed the boundary of Italy proper. Its crossing symbolized Caesar's declaration of war on Pompey, his former ally who, backed by the Senate, intended to put a definite stop to Caesar's ambition and to grasp in his own hands all power in the state.

When crossing the Rubicon Caesar began to realize an ambition, an idea similar to that which had inspired the democrat Sertorius, namely, the conquest of Italy and Rome from the new western provinces. In Caesar's case it was not Spain—then administered by Pompey's men—but Gaul which became the starting point and basis of the enterprise. The régime which Caesar intended to impose on Rome was not a democratic government—of which Sertorius had dreamed—but his own will and absolute power. The die was cast, in Caesar's own words, and in this hazardous game defeat was inevitable for what was left of the old Roman democracy, long since transformed into a government by powerful Roman aristocrats.

Unable to prevent Pompey's departure with his troops to the East, Caesar went to Spain, outmaneuvered Pompey's generals, and, after receiving their submission, like that of all the western provinces, entered Rome. The Senate had to capitulate. After being elected consul for the year 48 B.C., Caesar crossed the Adriatic to Greece, where Pompey had concentrated his forces near Durazzo (Dyrrachium).

The situation was one of great danger for Caesar. Pompey was very popular in the East, and the Senate, although it had had to invest Caesar with the consulship, was still nervous. Senators were far from praying for Caesar's victory, as they foresaw a greater decline of the Senate's influence on public affairs should Caesar succeed in defeating his rival. They were ready to embrace the cause of Pompey should the latter show any chance of success. For Caesar it was of paramount importance to act quickly and to control and influence public opinion both in Rome and in the western provinces, and he saw this very clearly. He embarked from Brindisi in January, in the worst season for navigation in this part of the Adriatic because of the ill-famed "bora," a stormy, northerly wind which still sweeps over the seas of the Adriatic in winter. He laid siege to the camp of Durazzo where Pompey's superior forces were concentrated, and used an elaborate system of military intelligence similar to that put into practice for the first time by Scipio Africanus in Spain when beleaguering Numantia, in order to enforce the blockade of enemy forces and to prevent them from breaking through. He signalled by smoke from one of his fortifications to another, in addition to reports, as he himself narrates in his history of the *Civil Wars* (Bk. III, chs. 65, 67). At the same time, appreciating greatly the importance which a timely report of his victory would have in the eastern and western provinces of the Empire, he held messengers in readiness, as he himself confesses (Bk. III, 43), to divulge the news that Pompey "was beleaguered by Caesar and did not dare to fight a pitched battle." We can suppose that he tried to spread this news in the near eastern provinces and in Rome, in order to weaken Pompey's position.

But this time Caesar was unlucky, and he suffered a major defeat. It was Pompey who "by reports and dispatches proceeded to celebrate throughout the world the victory of that day" (Bk. III, 72). This war of rapid intelligence reports in order to influence public opinion is highly characteristic and illustrates the nervous strain of the Roman population during the civil war.

In the end, however, Caesar won by endurance and firm will. Undismayed by ill luck, he pursued the campaign and cut his enemy's forces literally to pieces at Pharsalus in Thessaly. Pompey fled to Egypt, but Caesar won the war of rapid intelligence also. Well aware of the consequences which good or bad news from the battlefield could have in Rome, during his later campaign he organized for the first time in Roman history a regular information service by messengers on horseback posted in advance at regular distances. So it happened that timely intelligence concerning Caesar's victory in Thessaly was brought in this way to Messina in Sicily, threatened by the Pompeian fleet, which gave new courage to the defenders and spoiled the plans of the attackers. We can rightly suppose that the news of the victory and the further progress of the victorious campaign was reported by the same means to Rome, and that Caesar also established his relays of horsemen in Italy from Brindisi to Rome. From there, in similar fashion, the news had to be dispatched to all the important centers of the western provinces. This is not actually stated by Caesar but is clearly suggested by his intention, reported above, to spread everywhere the news of his expected success at Durazzo, and by his report that Pompey did the same after having defeated Caesar.

It is interesting to see how much Caesar valued the importance of speedy intelligence. He must have feared the ill effect in Rome of Pompey's boastful report of his success. Therefore, although very short of cavalry in his campaign in Greece, he did not hesitate to detach a considerable number of his horse in order to establish his relay system of dispatch riders.

It should be stressed that this first instance of a kind of regular, pre-arranged information service in Roman history was put into effect in the former Macedonian Empire. This circumstance seems to suggest that the example of Philip V of Macedonia might have inspired Caesar to establish his own service. It might also be that traces of this system still existed in Macedonia after Philip's and Perseus's downfall. We find the last evidence of the existence of a Macedonian post in Livy's report (Bk. XL, 56) of how Perseus, hiding in Thrace, received the news of his father's death from Macedonia.

Caesar seems to have had knowledge of such possibilities. He himself reports in his *Civil Wars* (Bk. III, 11) that, before starting on his campaign, he had sent Vibulius, his own and Pompey's trusted man, to the latter with proposals of peace, and that Vibulius travelled on his mission "night and day changing horses at every town." These stations with fresh horses were certainly not run by the state. But the fact that they existed even after the disintegration of the Macedonian Empire suggests that enterprising private citizens had taken over the institution established by the Macedonian kings and continued the service, which promised a good profit as there was no other means of rapid transport. As we have seen, Caesar himself used this private means of transport which had developed along Roman military roads, but it is to his merit that he introduced into the Roman information service an official post for the transportation of intelligence, paid for by the state and, in this first case, run by Roman cavalrymen.

Caesar's initiative must have greatly impressed his contemporaries. We have no direct evidence that his example was followed in this respect after his death, but it seems likely that his idea was put into practice during the struggles which followed his assassination. We can say with confidence that Caesar who, after Pompey's death lived for several months in Egypt and may there have acquired additional experience in the usefulness of a regular information service, would have reorganized the whole Roman system of obtaining and transmitting intelligence, had he lived longer.

But fate denied Caesar the fulfillment of his plans. This great statesman saw clearly that the old Republican institutions by which Rome had hitherto ruled over Italy and the western lands would not succeed in the East, which had been accustomed for centuries to despotic monarchy and to the theory of divine kingship. The continuous political crisis, which for almost the entire last century had troubled Rome and had ended in ruinous civil wars, revealed to him the unpleasant fact that these institutions were equally unable to assure the smooth functioning of a state which had outgrown its Republican proportions. He came to the conclusion that only a monarch could curb the greed of the proud and unruly senators, unable to resist the temptation to regard the new provinces as sources for their own enrichment. Therefore Caesar made a firm decision to transform the Roman aristocratic democracy into a Hellenistic absolute monarchy. But he was too hasty and impatient in the realization of his project. It is possible that if he had lived one generation later, he would have had a fair chance of succeeding. In his time the conviction was growing among the leading citizens of Rome that something needed to be done to adapt the old Roman constitution to the new situation, and many were inclined to think that the executive power in the empire should be concentrated in the hands of one able man. But, again, in Caesar's time the Romans were not yet ready to accept all the Hellenistic ideas of government. Caesar ignored this and, not content with a monarchy disguised in Republican garb, he endeavored to introduce a monarchy with a king at its head, an idea intolerable to the aristocratic circles of Roman Republicans. As a result of their conspiracy, Caesar paid with his life for his bold endeavor to destroy the old Roman Republican constitution.

3. Imperial Period

His tragic death was a stern warning, and Caesar's heir and adopted son Octavian-Augustus learned the lesson. Although deeply imbued with Roman national traditions, he was well aware of the fact that the old Roman polity was in need of radical change in order to fit the new situation. He also looked to the Hellenistic East for inspiration, but he did not follow the path of his rival, Anthony. Anthony was consul in the year of Caesar's murder and desired to become Caesar's successor. It was necessary to cooperate with Octavian-

Augustus in crushing Caesar's murderers; but, when their ways parted, Anthony made Egypt his headquarters from which he hoped to reconquer Rome and transform the empire into an oriental monarchy, with himself as divine king and the passionate Cleopatra, the last scion of the Ptolemies, as queen. It was the third attempt in a century to conquer Rome from an imperial province. But only Caesar had succeeded. Anthony failed even more dismally than Sertorius. Octavian-Augustus stirred up against him the national feeling of the whole of Italy, and, after their armies had been annihilated by those of Octavian, both Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

Now complete master of the immense empire, Octavian-Augustus began to reorganize the state machine. Keeping in mind Caesar's end as a stern warning, Octavian contented himself with the nominal restoration of the old Republican order, a restoration which was hardly anything more than a disguised monarchy. He ruled Rome and the empire, invested by the Senate with powers which were derived from republican magistracies but were in reality powers exercised by absolute rulers. Repudiating the title of king, he wisely contented himself with that of *Princeps*—first citizen.

It is now established that in his reorganization of Roman administration and finances, Octavian-Augustus was more inspired by oriental institutions than has been so far admitted by specialists. It seemed inevitable. The empire had grown enormously and so far only the oriental and Hellenistic monarchies had developed ideologies and organizations that could successfully hold a world empire together and enable it to expand. We have seen that a good intelligence service was one of the most important defensive weapons of the oriental monarchies against sudden attack from outside and against internal revolts and troubles. In Alexandria, after the defeat of Anthony, Octavian-Augustus could have had the opportunity of studying personally the surviving features of an intelligence service and royal post in Ptolemaic Egypt. He was too shrewd a statesman to overlook the fact that the world empire he administered would need something of this kind to ensure its security and stability.

But what is even more relevant, during the wars with the Republican fanatics who were Caesar's murderers, and during his campaign against Anthony declared a traitor to the Roman people, Augustus had many opportunities of gaining personal experience in the matter of the possible importance of a rapid, reliable transmission of intelligence. He still remembered the anxious hours when, hard pressed by the well-entrenched Republican troops, he received the news that the ships which he had expected to bring him reinforcements had been annihilated by the Republican fleet in the Ionian Sea. Then the only way out of that unpleasant situation was to provoke the enemy to a decisive battle in the near future. Had Brutus, the leader of the plot against Caesar, and commander of the Republican troops, known as early as did Octavian of the good news of his victorious fleet, he would have avoided battle. This victory had assured him of complete mastery of the sea, so he could simply have waited for the army to be weakened during the hard winter with all its provisions cut off. In his *Life of Brutus* (ch. 47) Plutarch reports this incident, and sees in the fact that Brutus learned of his naval victory too late, twenty days after it had happened, a direct intervention of divine Providence:

> But, since, as it would seem, the government of Rome could no longer be a democracy, and a monarchy was necessary, Heaven, wishing to remove from the scene the only man who stood in the way of him who was able to be sole master, cut off from Brutus the knowledge of that good fortune, although it very nearly reached him in time; for only one day before the battle which he was about to fight, late in the day, a certain Clodius deserted from the enemy, and brought word that Octavius had learned of the destruction of his fleet and was therefore eager for a decisive battle. The man found no credence for his story, nor did he even come into the presence of Brutus, but was altogether despised; it was thought that either he had heard an idle tale or was bringing false tidings in order to win favor.

This incident became decisive for the whole war. Octavian knew well that if intelligence of his victory had reached Brutus in time, the fate of the Roman empire might have been quite different.

He remembered also that in 36 B.C., when he was still in alliance with Anthony, a gross irregularity in Anthony's messenger service had cost the life of Sextus Pompeius, the son of Pompey. Anthony, dissatisfied with Sextus's conduct, sent a messenger to his general, Marcus Titius, with the command to kill the son of Pompey. But soon, regretting his decision, he dispatched another courier with the order that the life of Sextus be spared. According to Dio (Bk. XLIX, 18) the bearer of the second letter arrived before the first. When later the bearer of that first letter arrived with the order to put Sextus to death, Titius, thinking that this was a new order, executed Sextus. Octavian expressed satisfaction when he heard the news, but was intelligent enough to understand the real cause of Sextus's execution.

And then, again, when Octavian was fighting Anthony, he profited at least twice from the defective functioning of the latter's intelligence service. After the naval battle at Actium in 31 B.C., Anthony fled to Libya where he learned from the men following him in cargo boats that the army was still intact and that there might still be hope of saving it. Anthony dispatched messengers with appropriate orders, but it was too late. The messengers missed Canidius, Anthony's general, who was on his way to Anthony with the news that the army too, was lost. Plutarch, who gives us this information in his *Life of Anthony* (chs. 67, 68), says further that the army held out for seven days before going over to Octavian. If Anthony had made arrangements to obtain information more rapidly, he could have made things more difficult for his victorious rival.

Another similar opportunity was offered to Anthony. Soon afterwards, when Octavian was pursuing his campaign against Anthony in Asia and was still uncertain about the further moves which Anthony—who had in the meantime joined Cleopatra in Egypt—intended to make, he was suddenly recalled to Italy. Troubles and unrest arose among the veterans, who were dissatisfied because they had not been allowed to accompany Octavian, or, rather, because they regretted that they would not participate in the plundering of Egypt after the final victory.

Fearing that Anthony might profit from this unpleasant incident, Octavian hurried to Italy, appeased the veterans with lavish presents and grants and, in a month's time, was back in Greece. In order to avoid the dangerous passage to Asia around Cape Malea, the furthermost point of the Peloponnesus, for it was wintertime and a dangerous season for navigation, he guided his ships across the isthmus of the Peloponnesus. As Dio has it (Bk. LI, 5), ". . . [he] got back to Asia so quickly that Anthony and Cleopatra learned at one and the same time both of his departure and of his return." Thus it happened that Anthony lost his last chance of prolonging the struggle.

All this explains why Augustus understood the importance of rapidity and regularity in transmitting intelligence, and why he made a revolutionary step in the history of Roman intelligence by founding a regular service assured by special messengers. His biographer Suetonius is, however, very brief in reporting this important innovation (ch. 49):

> To enable what was going on in each of the provinces to be reported and known more speedily and promptly, he at first stationed young men at short intervals along the military roads, and afterwards post-chaises

> [carriages]. The latter has seemed the more convenient arrangement, since the same men who bring the dispatches from any place can, if occasion demands, be questioned as well.

Octavian-Augustus's first step was thus to post on the main Roman military roads relays of messengers handing on their messages to each other, and thus speeding delivery to Rome's political headquarters. This was contrary to the practice introduced during the Republic when a messenger (*strator*) sent from a province covered the whole journey to Rome itself as best he could. The practice first introduced by Octavian assured greater rapidity of delivery, and enabled messages to be sent more frequently. But Octavian misused one advantage which the old practice had. The messenger coming directly from the province bearing intelligence could be interrogated and, as the man himself lived in the place in question, was able to offer additional information which may have been important for a better understanding of the message he had brought. Octavian, therefore, soon changed his first scheme and stationed at the relay posts carriages with animals instead of messengers, which brought the bearer of intelligence as rapidly as possible from the province to Rome. In ordering this change Octavian was aware that this kind of imperial post would at the same time serve as a convenient means of transportation for magistrates on official missions and replace the old-fashioned right to *evectio*, or the requisitioning of horses and carriages from the municipalities through which they passed. This was the beginning of the famous Roman *cursus publicus*, or state post, which existed up to the end of the Roman Empire, and was the forerunner of our modern fast methods of passing information and of transportation in Europe and America.

There is still controversy concerning the origin of this organization among the few specialists who have dealt fully with this problem. Did it evolve from the old Roman custom of the right to *evectio*, or is the whole idea of the Roman state post of Eastern origin? Did Augustus take his inspiration from Xenophon's description of the Persian information service? Did he imitate the system introduced by the Seleucids in Syria, or that of Ptolemaic Egypt?

From what we have said above concerning the Roman information service during the Republic, it can hardly be concluded that Augustus's state post was basically of Roman origin. There is no trace of an attempt at such an institution in the Republican period. The only man who established a rapid information service was Caesar, and his dispatch riders functioned only for a short time. His example might have been imitated in some way by Octavian, Brutus, and Anthony during the civil war following Caesar's assassination. We have seen that Octavian had a fairly reliable information service. But all this was provoked by the emergencies of the time, and the main purpose of all such initiative was of a military nature.

We cannot say that the example of the Macedonians made a marked impression on the Romans, although Caesar might have been spurred by the Macedonian example to organize his relay service of dispatch riders. There is no indication that Octavian was acquainted with, or impressed by, the organization which he might have found in Syria. Neither can we say with certainty that Augustus had studied Xenophon's reports on the Persian state post and information service. It is conjecture for which there is no evidence.

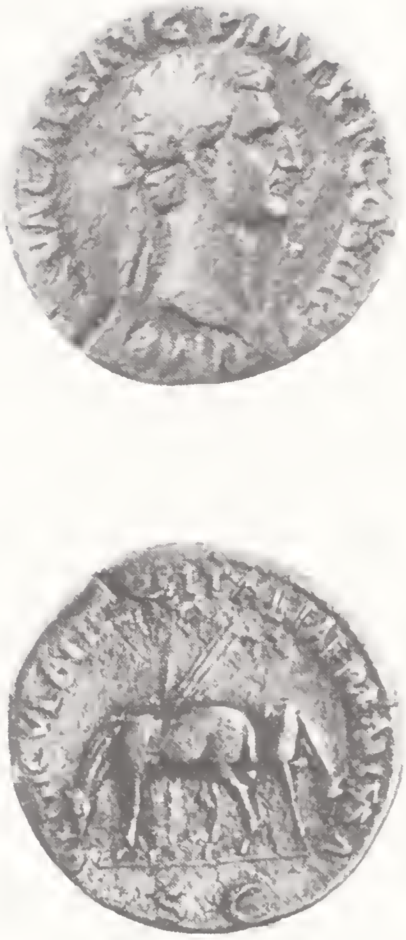
The most likely explanation is that Octavian was inspired first of all by the example of his adoptive father, Caesar, and was then spurred on by his own personal experience. The oriental influence, however, cannot be ruled out. It was often believed that Octavian-Augustus was hostile in principle to oriental and Hellenistic infiltrations into Roman life. This opinion has influenced some scholars and has induced them to look exclusively for a Roman inspiration in Octavian's initiative. But this opinion is incorrect; it was an American scholar, M. Hammond, who realized that Augustus was influenced much more by Hellenistic ideas in the reconstruction of Roman policy and administration than had been thought heretofore. It is established that Augustus was most impressed by the political and financial system of Ptolemaic Egypt. He extended a number of taxes imposed by the Ptolemies on their subjects in Egypt to the whole empire. Another imitation of a Ptolemaic institution was the survey of the empire which Augustus imitated, and which is quoted in the Gospel of St. Luke (ch. 2) as an explanation of the journey of St. Joseph with the Lord's mother from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Augustus's purpose was not the military conscription of able-bodied men, but a precise financial assessment of taxable property in the empire. It is, however, possible that this latter measure had already been introduced by Caesar and that here Augustus was simply following, as in many other matters, the footsteps of his adoptive father.

Another institution taken over from Egypt is worth mentioning, as it has a certain relevance to our subject. It is the founding of a kind of fire brigade in Rome. These are fire-pickets, called *vigiles*. The *vigilantes* are an imitation of a similar institution known in Alexandria under the Ptolemies. These *vigiles*, commanded by a special prefect, developed in time into a kind of imperial police who, besides fire-fighting, ensured the security of the streets and reported all dangerous movements among the Roman population. All this seems to indicate that Augustus, following here the example of Caesar, took inspiration from him and found in Egypt an example for his own organization of the information service.

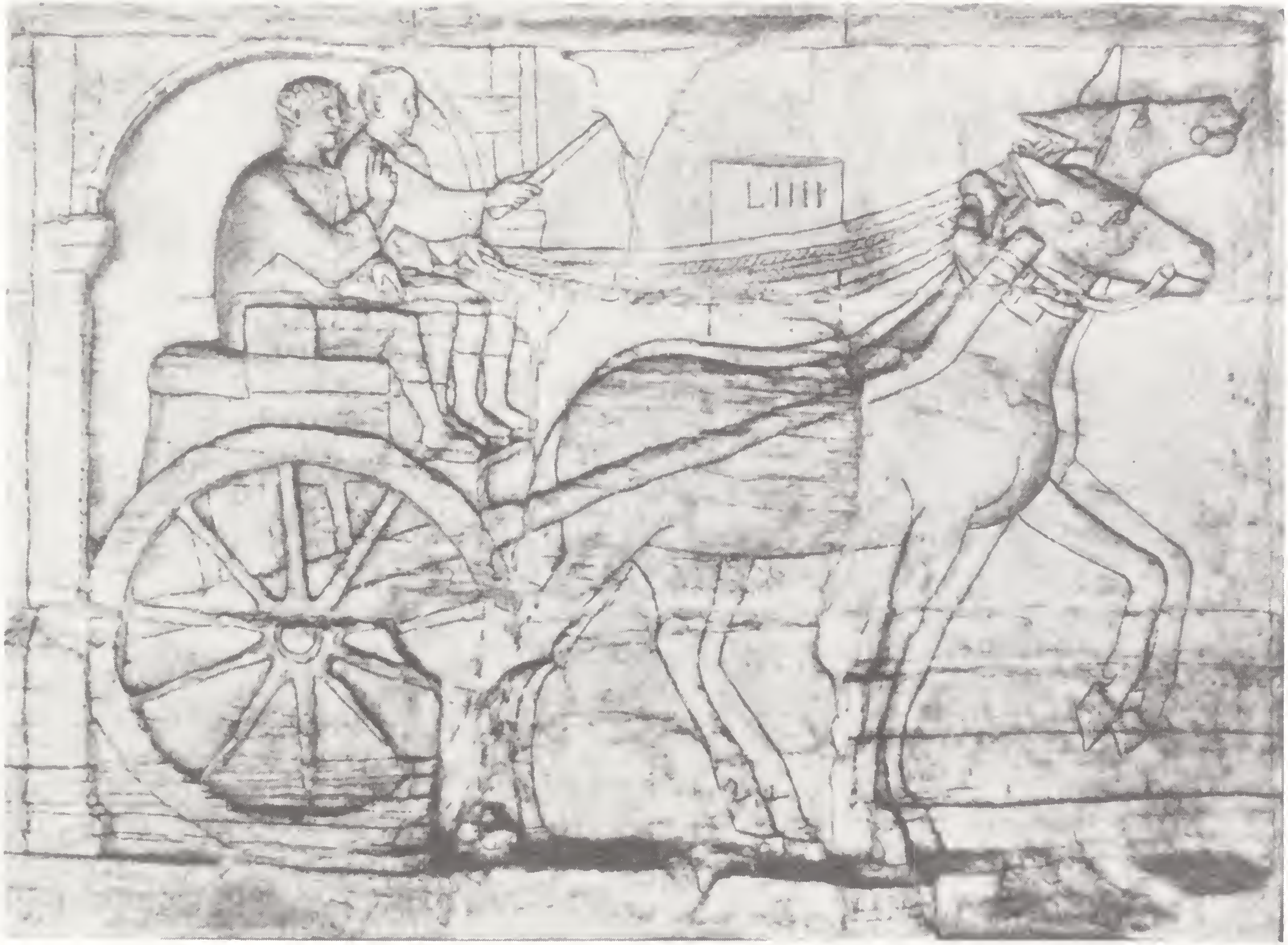
There is an important argument in favor of this thesis. A Latin inscription from the reign of the Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41–54) reveals that this emperor tried to alleviate the burden of providing for all the needs of the *cursus publicus*, or state post, imposed on his subjects. We know that the Egyptian state post was supported by the contributions of the inhabitants of the regions through which the royal post ran. As the inscription indicates that this was an old custom, it seems logical to conclude that it was introduced by the founder of the state post when Augustus decided to replace the messengers with post-chaises. The population was accustomed to the requisitionings of magistrates appointed by the Senate, who had the right of *evectio* or *legatio libera*, and therefore Augustus's decision was accepted without difficulty. In Augustus's time the state post was in its initial stage. It functioned only on some of the main roads, and the use of carriages and beasts for transport cannot have been heavy. At that time it could not have been foreseen how fast the institution would develop and how burdensome it would become to the population.

As we have seen, the Emperor Claudius tried to lighten this burden, but with no great success. The inhabitants of Italy probably suffered the most, so it seems, under Caligula, Claudius's predecessor, when the state post was already in operation along all major roads of Italy. Traffic was frequent, so the need for carriages and animals was very great, since messengers from other provinces were bound to converge on Italian roads on their way to Rome. The Emperor Nerva (A.D. 96–98) felt the need to dispense with the obligation, imposed by the Italian municipalities, of supplying the necessary animals and vehicles, and he ordered the cost of the state post in Italy to be paid by the imperial fisc. He seems to have commemorated this deed with the issue of special coins on which a carriage was represented with the mules grazing contentedly behind it. The inscription, *Vehiculatione Italiae Remissa* ("The obligation of caring for post suppressed in Italy"), interprets eloquently the emperor's deed and the scene.

Nerva's successor Trajan (A.D. 98–117) seems to have extended the postal and intelligence service to the provinces. Hadrian (A.D.



The *Sestertius* of Nerva, bearing the inscription "VEHICVLATIONE ITALIAE REMISSA" (actual size). Obverse: Head of the Emperor Nerva. Reverse: Mules grazing before a carriage, with the above inscription. Courtesy American Numismatic Society.



Rheda (or *Raeda*, a travelling carriage or wagon) passing a milestone on the *cursus publicus*; relief from Igel, near Trier (U. Kahrstedt, *Kulturgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*).

117–138), who succeeded him, apparently strengthened the structure of the whole institution by founding a special "prefecture of the post" responsible directly to the emperor, or his representative the Prefect of the Life-guard, and by instituting special officials, or *mancipes*, at each station who were responsible for the smooth functioning of the post in their districts.

Severus (A.D. 193–211), the founder of a new imperial dynasty, "wishing to ingratiate himself with the people," according to the "Imperial History"—*Historia Augusta* (ch. XI, 2)—"took the postal service out of private hands and transferred its costs to the privy purse." But this reform, although welcomed by the people, was ruinous to the fisc, and the former practice was soon reinstated. We find in Justinian's great legislative collection, the *Corpus* of Civil Law (*Digesta*, L, 5.10), a quotation from a work of the Roman jurist Julius Paulus, written under Severus's successor Caracalla (A.D. 211–217), particularizing the duties of the citizens, and among them is the obligation to contribute to the sustenance of the imperial post. Only soldiers and teachers in the humanities were exempt from this obligation.

This passage of Julius Paulus is the more interesting as he describes the obligation by the words *praestatio angariorum*. Again we find here the Persian word for postal messenger—*angaros*—which had been borrowed from the Persians by Greek writers in describing the royal post. The expression became popular in the Hellenistic period in Syria and in Egypt. We find this expression also in the original Greek text of the Gospel (St. Matthew, 5:41; 27:32). Here it appears also in Latin, taken probably from Egypt, which is another indication of the oriental origin of a regular postal and information service.

Thus it happened that the population remained responsible for the maintenance of the post, even in the later imperial period. Even Diocletian (A.D. 284–305), who made great changes in the organization of this service, did not dare to disturb this arrangement. The Roman postal service was thus a state institution, paid for by the population which, however, was denied the benefit of using its services. The whole institution was restricted to state business; only state messengers and officials in the service of the state were permitted to make use of it.

The state post functioned also on important rivers, especially in the Po Valley, the boats being called *naves cursoriae*, the Latin translation of the Greek word *dromones*, also used to designate the boats in this service. This service was organized in the same way as the *cursus publicus*, with landing stages for change of boats and with personnel called *dromonarii*, or pilots. Communication by sea with overseas provinces was effected by ships in the service of the state, put at the disposal of the state by the cities from which the messengers sailed. However, we learn from the *Acts* of the Apostles (*Acts*, 27 ff.) that messengers and officials also used for their official journeys the first available private cargo ship. The centurion who brought St. Paul and the other prisoners to Rome travelled, finally, in three successive merchant vessels.

In order to prevent abuses and alleviate somewhat the burden on the population, the emperors reserved to themselves the right to grant permission to use the state post, providing persons entitled to this privilege with a special *diploma*, which was issued sparingly. Aside from the emperors, only the Prefect of the Life-guard, the supreme chief of the post, was granted the same privilege of issuing the *diploma*. The administrators of the provinces were given a limited number of such *diplomas* with the strict injunction to use them only for important matters concerning the security of the state. How strict the emperors were in this matter is illustrated by the correspondence between the Emperor Trajan and his friend Pliny, governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor (A.D. 111) who gave this *diploma* to his wife hurrying to her aunt in Rome after the death of her grandfather. He immediately informed the emperor of his action and asked his pardon (*Letters*, 120, 121).

The *diplomas* were valid only for a specified period, and on the death of an emperor the validity of all *diplomas* issued by him expired automatically. In the imperial chancellery, a *diplomatibus*, or special secretary, was responsible for the delivery of the *diplomas*. All of which explains the great importance attributed by the emperors to the institution of the state post.

The use of the post was granted more liberally to messengers bringing information to and from Rome. They were still called *tabellarii* and, as they were numerous, they soon began to form guilds, not only in Rome, but also in the important postal stations of the provinces. They were called Augustus's or Caesar's messengers, or messengers with the *diploma*. It seems, however, that they were not provided with a special *diploma* for each voyage, but were given a special *tessera*, an insignia showing that they were "on duty"; but, when the mission was completed, the *tessera* was returned to the proper authority at their station. The keeper of the *tessera*, or the *tesserarius* at each station, ranked second to the chief of the messengers, called *optio*. In Rome, these messengers were placed in the

(Top) Air view of a part of the *cursus publicus* in Syria.
(Bottom) Ground view of the *cursus publicus*, showing its massive construction.
(U. Kahrstedt, *Kulturgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit.*)

various departments of administrations, such as justice, supply, administration of provinces; and special messengers, the *tabellarii castrenses*, were at the disposal of the commanders of the armies.

Errands in Rome, its outskirts, and in the main cities of the provinces were performed by another category of messengers called *cursores*, or runners. As their name implies, they discharged their duties on foot. They were also organized on a military basis with a prefect and a special instructor at each station. Most of these details concerning the functions and organizations of the *tabellarii* and *cursores* are found in numerous Latin inscriptions, preserved from the early imperial period.

Information about the organization of the post in general during this period is scarce. However, we learn many particulars in this respect from imperial decrees and laws, published in the third and fourth centuries and preserved in the two greatest collections of Roman law, that of Theodosius II and the *Corpus* of Civil Law of Justinian. We may assume that the organization of the state post outlined in these decrees and other documents from that time already existed in the early imperial period, all of which allows us to draw in a few strokes the following picture. Postal stations were constructed at given distances of from 60 to 75 km.; at every 100 km. along all roads on which the *cursus publicus* functioned, *mansiones*, or resting places, were built, furnished with all that was necessary to meet the immediate needs of both travellers and beasts, and serving, at the same time, as state hotels for the lodging of persons provided with the imperial *diploma*. The carriages were state property and the cost of their repairs was recovered from the state budget. They were driven by mules, the horses being reserved for riding. It appears that at each relay station about forty beasts were cared for, some of them always ready for service. Each station maintained a large personnel of grooms and muleteers for every three beasts, veterinarians, wheelwrights, conductors, and guards. The beasts were furnished by the local population, the local authorities also being responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and stables. The fodder, however, although provided by the local population, was paid for by the government. Between the main stations were a certain number of changing-stations or *mutationes* at a distance of about 15 km., which stabled fresh horses and mules, but with a reduced personnel and a smaller number of beasts, perhaps twenty, but without carriages and without lodging. The passengers were required to change the carriages at each *mansio* as the vehicles were returned to the home station in order to prevent confusion.

Imperial decrees gave very minute instructions as to the number of beasts to which the travellers were entitled, the number of persons each carriage should accommodate, the weight with which it was permissible to load the post-chaises and horses, specifications indicating when messengers were entitled to an extra horse or donkey for their baggage, etc. The Emperor Diocletian did his utmost to perfect the organization of the postal service. It is most probably due to him that the *cursus* was divided into two services: the *cursus velox*—rapid postal service, and the *cursus clabularius*—for the conveyance of merchandise of considerable weight, belonging to the fisc. Oxen were the only beasts employed for this latter kind of transport.

The imperial post was not only a means of rapid transport for officials and for the transmission of information, but it became also the most convenient instrument for policing the population, and controlling and influencing public opinion. In the early imperial period, the main agents in this respect were the *frumentarii*. It sounds strange, but, as their name suggests, they seem to have been grain-dealers, assuring the smooth provision of grain and food to the cities and to the army. They are mentioned as performing this function by Livy (Bk. XXXVIII, 35) for the year 189 B.C. Cicero (*De Officiis*, Bk. III, chs. 50, 51) speaks of *frumentarii* as grain-dealers providing the island of Rhodes with grain from Alexandria. Caesar, in his description of the Gallic War (Bk. VIII, 35) also speaks of grain-dealers, and we may conclude from his words that he found the presence of grain-dealers, or *frumentarii*, connected with the army a common thing.

How can their change of occupation to become the main intelligence agents of the emperors and of the army be explained? Was it because of the opportunities provided by their business, enabling them to gather information from many sources, which suggested to the authorities that these men could fulfill a double role? It is plausible enough. And we know that the army intelligence service, at least from Caesar's time, was performed by the *speculatores*, or scouts. Their role was similar to that of the scouts employed by the United States Army in the "Wild West" during the Indian wars. They were attached to the staff of a commander and they seem to have been employed by him also as bearers of his orders. It is possible that they were assisted in their missions by the *frumentarii*.

We read in Appian's *History of the Civil Wars* (Bk. III, chs. 31, 40, 43) an interesting remark which illustrates the success with which traders, or agents disguised as traders, could be used for political propaganda and as spies in the army. It was Octavian-Augustus himself who conceived the idea when he discovered that Mark Anthony, although apparently his ally in preparing the punishment of Caesar's murderers, was undermining the growing popularity of Octavian with the Roman people. "Octavian, thus at last openly attacked, sent numerous agents to the towns colonized by his father [i.e. Caesar] to tell how he had been treated and to learn the state of feeling in each. He also sent certain persons in the guise of traders into Anthony's camp [which was near Brindisi] to mingle with the soldiers, to work upon the boldest of them, and secretly distribute handbills among the rank and file."

We might find here the first evidence of the employment as spies and political agents of the *frumentarii*, or grain-dealers, and peddlers, mingling freely with the soldiers and offering their merchandise. We learn from the further chapters of Appian's *History* how effective this propaganda was and how difficult it was to distinguish between the genuine dealers and disguised political agents.

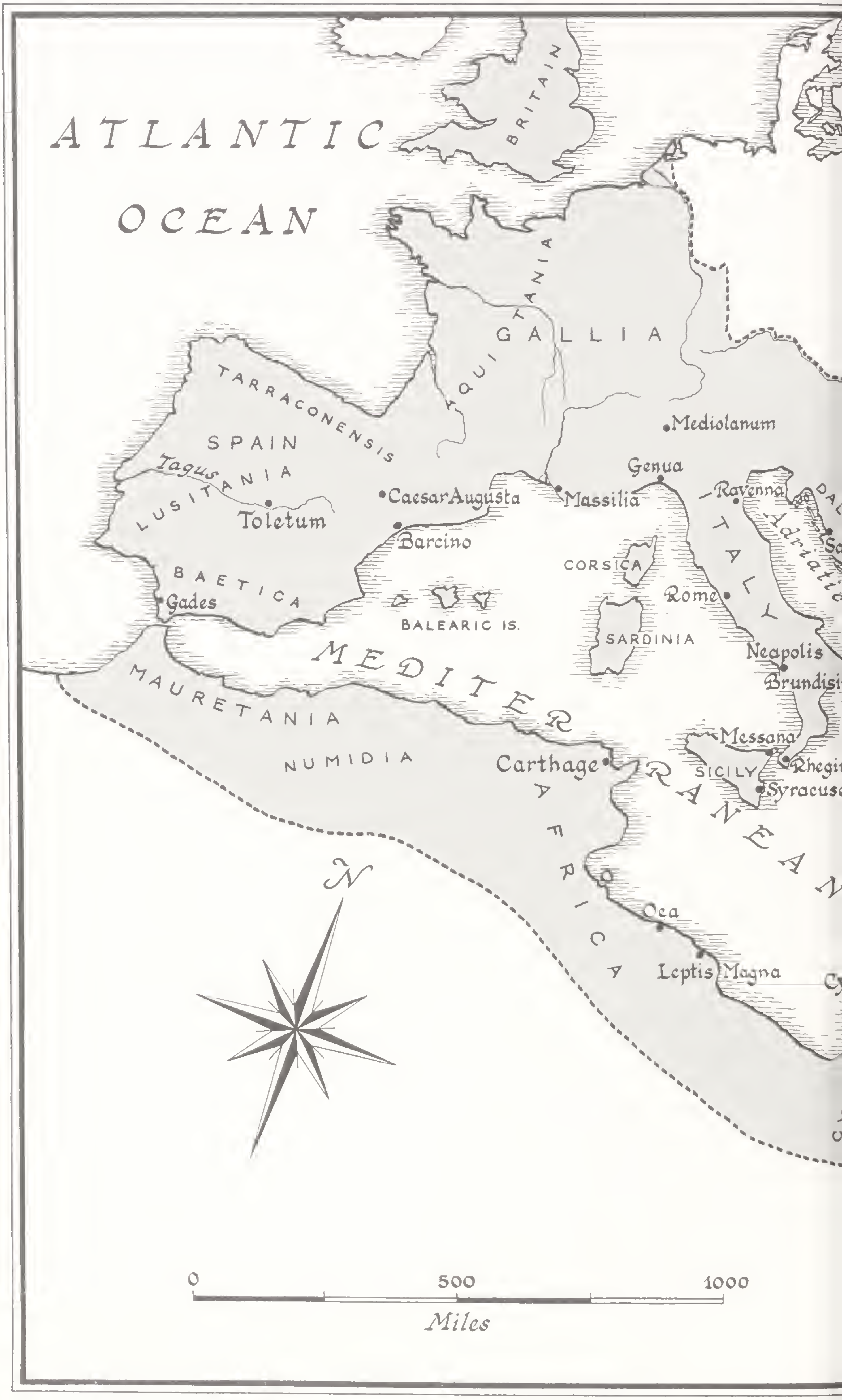
The usefulness of traders as spies in distributing political pamphlets and divulging news as a propaganda device was understood not only by Octavian-Augustus but also by other military chiefs and emperors. Thus we can explain why the *frumentarii* appear in the early imperial period side by side with the *speculatores* exercising in the army the same functions as the scouts. The complete transformation of the *frumentarii* into *speculatores* may have been effected under the Emperor Trajan. At least it is evident that from the second century of our era on, the activity of the *frumentarii* becomes more noticeable than that of the *speculatores* and, at last, their name is given exclusively to soldiers who formerly exercised the functions of the *speculatores*. We learn from numerous Latin inscriptions that every legion had its own body of *frumentarii*.

A similar evolution can be seen at the courts of the emperors. In the beginning each emperor had his own *speculatores* who were attached to the formations of his bodyguard. He employed them in a fashion similar to that of the army, as his own intelligence agents, and as messengers carrying confidential letters and orders. The governors of the provinces must also have used the *speculatores* for similar purposes. We read, for example, in the Gospel of St. Mark (6:27) that Herod sent a *speculator* to the prison with the order to execute St. John the Baptist. As the original Greek text has the Latin word *speculator*, it would seem that, when the Gospel was written, this kind of service was generally still performed by the *speculatores*, and not the *frumentarii*. St. Mark, the author of the Gospel, here describes Herod's executioner by the name which was familiar to him.

But here again, at the emperor's court, we see that in the second century the *speculatores* were being replaced by the *frumentarii*. From that period on, the *frumentarii* flourished and became the main agents in the intelligence service of the emperors also. We learn in the "Imperial History" (*Historia Augusta*) interesting details illustrating their duties. Hadrian (A.D. 117–138) used them to spy on the private lives of his friends, as described in the following charming story (Hadrian XI, 6): "The wife of a certain man wrote to her husband, complaining that he was so preoccupied by pleasures and baths that he would not return home to her, and Hadrian found this out through his private agents (*per frumentarios*). And so, when the husband asked for a furlough, Hadrian reproached him with his fondness for his baths and his pleasures. Whereupon the man exclaimed: 'What, did my wife write you just what she wrote to me?' "

Under Commodus (A.D. 180[172]–192), however, the prefects of the guards (Commodus IV, 5) had less innocent employment for the *frumentarii:* they ordered them to assassinate one of the emperor's favorites. In the same work (XXIII, 1) Alexander Severus is praised for having chosen his agents only among honest and reliable men. The usurper Macrinus (A.D. 217–218) was particularly appreciative of the *frumentarii* and used their services to promote his own career before becoming emperor. We find an interesting report on Macrinus in Dio's *Roman History* (Bk. LXXIX, chs. 14, 15). As this passage gives us, at the same time, an insight into the dark background of the emperors' courts where the activity of the imperial secret agents quite often became ominous, and into the milieu from which the imperial agents sprang, we quote it verbatim:

> Another thing for which many criticized him [Macrinus] was his elevation of Adventus. This man had first served in the mercenary force among the spies and scouts, and upon quitting that position had been made one of the couriers [*grammatoforos* for the Latin *frumentarius*] and appointed their leader, and still later had been advanced to procuratorship; and now the emperor appointed him senator, fellow-consul and prefect of the city, though he could neither see by reason of old age nor read for lack of education nor accomplish anything for want of experience. . . . Indeed, it looked as though he had made Adventus city prefect with the sole purpose of polluting the senate-chamber, inasmuch as the man had only served in the mercenary force and had performed the various duties of


ATLANTIC
OCEAN
BRITAIN
AQUITANIA
GALLIA
TARRACONENSIS
SPAIN
Tagus
LUSITANIA
Toletum
Caesar Augusta
Barcino
BAETICA
Gades
BALEARIC IS.
CORSICA
SARDINIA
Mediolanum
Genua
Massilia
Ravenna
TALY
Adriatic
Rome
Neapolis
Brundisi
Messana
Rhegi
SICILY
Syracus
MEDITERRANEAN
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NUMIDIA
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AFRICA
Oca
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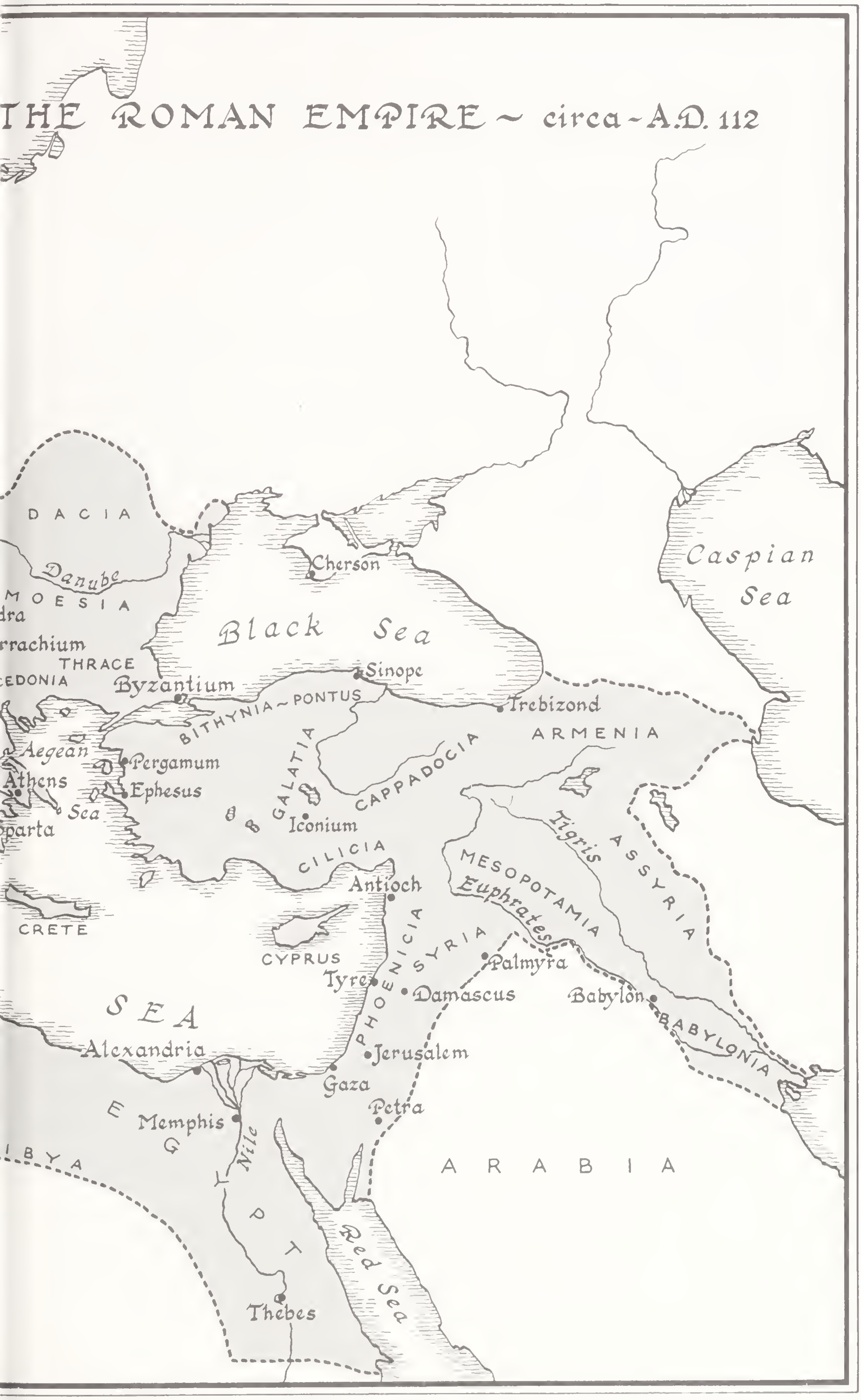

THE ROMAN EMPIRE ~ circa ~ A.D. 112
DACIA
Danube
MOESIA
dra
rrachium
THRACE
EDONIA
Byzantium
Aegean
Athens
Sea
parta
CRETE
Black Sea
Cherson
Caspian Sea
Sinope
BITHYNIA ~ PONTUS
Trebizond
ARMENIA
Pergamum
Ephesus
GALATIA
CAPPADOCIA
Iconium
CILICIA
Antioch
MESOPOTAMIA
Tigris
ASSYRIA
Euphrates
CYPRUS
PHOENICIA
SYRIA
Palmyra
Tyre
Damascus
Babylon
BABYLONIA
SEA
Alexandria
Jerusalem
Gaza
Petra
Memphis
EGYPT
Nile
IBYA
ARABIA
Red Sea
Thebes

> executioners, scouts, and centurions. . . . But these were not the only acts for which he [Macrinus] met with well-deserved censure; he was also blamed for appointing as prefects Ulpius Julianus and Julianus Nestor, men who possessed no excellence at all and had not been widely tested in affairs, but had become quite notorious for knavery in Caracalla's reign; for being in command of his couriers [*angeliaforoi* = bearers of messages, i.e. *frumentarii*] they had been of great assistance to him [i.e. Macrinus] in satisfying his unholy curiosity.

This passage illustrates better than any other the kind of services the imperial secret agents performed at the court where intrigues of the palace camarilla flourished. Macrinus, after becoming emperor, also employed his secret agents to spy on the private lives of his soldiers, as we are told in the *Historia Augusta* (Macrinus XII, 4). From the same source we learn that the Emperor Gallienus (Claudius XVII, 1) employed his *frumentarii* as secret agents instructed to report to him all that other high officials said of him. It was a precaution taken against possible conspirators, but it is not difficult to see how easily this confidential mission could be misused. Under Maximinus and Balbinus, according to the *Historia Augusta* (X, 2), the *frumentarii* are mentioned as dispatch riders.

Besides these functions they seem to have been employed also as policemen to whose care were entrusted those Roman citizens who had appealed to the supreme court of the Caesar. St. Paul appears to have had a personal acquaintance with them, for the soldier who supervised him in Rome (Acts 28.16) pending the decision of the emperor to whom he had appealed, was evidently one of the *frumentarii*. In extant Latin inscriptions, they appear also as prison guards, and supervisors in Roman "concentration camps," which were usually erected near important mines in which worked those men condemned to forced labor. We know, for instance, that in A.D. 200 the concentration camp in the famous war-like work of Caracalla was commanded by a captain (*centurio*) of the *frumentarii*.

As it was their duty to report to the emperor, or to his supreme officer, the Prefect of the Life-guard, what was being said and done in Rome, it was natural for them to be in close touch with the fire brigade in Rome, the *vigiles* who, as we have already mentioned, had been transformed into a kind of imperial police. It might be that one or more *frumentarii* were attached to every fire station. These details also are obtained from Latin inscriptions.

Naturally, the *frumentarii*, as secret police agents, must have played a leading role in the persecution of the Christians, as they seem to have been the chief agents who spied on the Christians and arrested them. We read in the first *Ecclesiastical History*, written by Eusebius in the fourth century, a report of how the martyr Dionysius was being sought by a *frumentarius*. The passage (Bk. VI, 40) is a vivid reflection of the dread with which the Christians awaited the unwelcome visit of a *frumentarius:*

> Now I for my part speak also before God, and He knows if I lie. Acting not on my own judgment nor apart from God have I taken flight; but on a former occasion also, when the persecution under Decius was publicly proclaimed, that selfsame hour Sabinus sent a *frumentarius* to seek me out, and on my part I remained four days at my house expecting the arrival of the *frumentarius;* but he went around searching everything, the roads, the rivers, the fields, where he suspected I was hidden or walking, but was holden with blindness and did not find the house. For he did not believe that, pursued as I was, I was staying at home; and after the fourth day, when God bade me depart, and miraculously made a way, with difficulty did I and the boys and many of the brethren set out together.

St. Cyprian also speaks in one of his letters (Letter 81) of *frumentarii* who had been sent to arrest him and to bring him into the presence of the magistrate. When he learned this from his faithful followers—it is an example of a kind of intelligence introduced by the Christians during the persecution—the bishop went into hiding. In the *Acts* of the martyrs we read sometimes that they were arrested or guarded by soldiers: in many instances this might mean the *frumentarii* because they were soldiers, attached to each legion as a special corps. Even when commanded to serve in Rome or at the headquarters of the provincial governors, or elsewhere, they still remained members of their former military detachments.

Besides their Roman headquarters, which were most probably in the *castra peregrinorum*, or camp of the foreigners, there were stations in the Roman port of Ostia from which prisoners sent from the provinces by sea were conducted to Rome. For the same reasons there were stations on the roads served by the *cursus publicus* to facilitate the authorities in gleaning information. In the execution of their office, the *frumentarii* freely used the state post, and they naturally supervised the functioning of this valuable institution. It seems, moreover, that in the third century they took over the functions of the *tabellarii* in many cases, and became couriers. This role could have served at least as a good smoke-screen for their main function as secret agents, spies, reporters of all gossip and dangerous movements to their supreme authority, the Prefect of the Life-guard.

At least, from this period on, the *tabellarii* cease to be mentioned in the documents at our disposal.

It is a very interesting evolution. A corps which in the very beginning was intended to be a special detachment of the legions for the purpose of military intelligence, gradually became a police corps used by the emperors for their own intelligence service, its members exercising the duties of criminal policemen, assisting the governors in policing the population, spying on the movements of subject elements, controlling the state post—so important in the administration of the empire and for its information service—and sometimes even acting as executioners. In spite of all this, they still remained soldiers, boasting of the number of the legion to which they belonged. At first glance there seems to be an analogy between the Roman *frumentarii* and the ill-famed Gestapo, the secret police of Adolf Hitler. Both were organized on a military pattern, and the functions of the *frumentarii* were often the same as those of the infamous secret police of the German Third Reich. But there the analogy stops. The imperial *frumentarii* were not a true secret state police in the modern sense. In Rome this interesting evolution did not go so far as that. The *frumentarii* were not grouped strictly into one corps with a particular chief directing their activities and giving them his own instructions. They were soldiers, trained in military intelligence, borrowed by the central and provincial authorities for special purposes which they could accomplish more effectively than the ordinary police or regular army.

The activity of the *frumentarii* in the service of the emperor reveals, as we have seen, some of the less admirable aspects of imperial Rome which grew more and more unseemly as the Principate—the rule of the first citizen, the *Princeps*—founded by Augustus was transformed into an oriental monarchy. These aspects dimmed the light and the splendor with which the oriental and Hellenistic political ideas surrounded the person of the absolute and deified monarch. It was unfortunate that Augustus and his successors, when creating the central administrative bureaus of the empire, did not do so with clerks active in the administration during the Republican period, but entrusted important and responsible offices in their chanceries to their own slaves and freedmen. As a result, the slaves, or men of low origin, exercised a decisive influence on state affairs, and the emperors themselves, unapproachable by the ordinary citizen, depended on that which their favorites, slaves, and freedmen chose to report to them. The palace became a nest of intrigues and plots. Courtesans, and wives of dubious character, often played a disastrous role. But this is sufficiently known and we do not need to dwell on the description of this sad transformation. We mention it only to illustrate how easy it was for the imperial *frumentarii* to take part in these intrigues, to misuse for their own ends their confidential and prominent role in the intelligence service, to enrich themselves and to sell their services and confidential reports to adventurers, and to others who sought the ruin of personal or political enemies at any price. This disastrous activity of the *frumentarii* must have flourished particularly during the third century, following the extinction of the Severan dynasty (A.D. 235), when civil war broke out anew and the army controlled the election and disposition of the emperors. The *frumentarii* as a body became so dreaded and hated by the citizens that, when the Emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284–305) at last put an end to the disorders and began to reorganize the whole state machinery, he decided to suppress the *frumentarii* altogether.

But Diocletian soon realized that he could not govern successfully so immense an empire without an organized intelligence service. It was under his reign that the transformation of the Roman Empire into an absolute monarchy was completed. The Hellenistic and oriental influences which, from the time of Caesar and Augustus had become more and more evident in Roman life and thought, reached their peak under Diocletian. One of the most outstanding features of the Hellenistic age was its polity. In the time of Alexander the Great the Greek idea that the ablest men should govern the city states—an idea expressed so forcibly by Plato and Aristotle, the greatest philosophers and political thinkers of Greece—was fused with the oriental idea of kingship. The result was that absolute government by one man, considered to be the best because of his divine character, became the only form of rulership. The Roman Republican policy, already strongly aristocratic in the last period of the Roman Republic, at last succumbed to this mighty current. Diocletian, who took the last step, saw that an absolute monarchy could not rule without strict surveillance of the activities of its subjects. After the suppression of the *frumentarii*, he therefore founded a special intelligence service which he entrusted to a new corps—the *agentes in rebus*—men with a special mission, also organized on a military basis, but this time forming a special department in the imperial service.

Our information about the activities and the organization of this new body is derived from the Constantinian and post-Constantinopolitan period, when the capital of the Roman Empire was transferred to Byzantium-Constantinople. Therefore we shall deal with this new intelligence service in the following chapter.

Since the documentary evidence is very scarce, we can only study in general outline the methods by which the Romans in the imperial period secured information from abroad concerning events taking place in the countries on the borderlands of the empire. First, they continued the old method of relying on the reports of their allies. The system of allied, protected, or befriended kings and chiefs was maintained by the Romans during the imperial period, especially in Asia and Africa. One of these kings is well known to us from the Gospels, namely, Herod Agrippa. In the correspondence of Pliny the Younger we find an interesting piece of evidence revealing how eager these allies were to inform the emperors on matters of political or military importance. Pliny writes to Trajan (Bk. X, lxiv): "King Sauromates wrote to me that there were some things which you should know without delay. Therefore to speed up his journey I provided the messenger (*tabellarius*) whom he had sent to you with a letter, with a *diploma*," i.e. to enable him to use the state post.

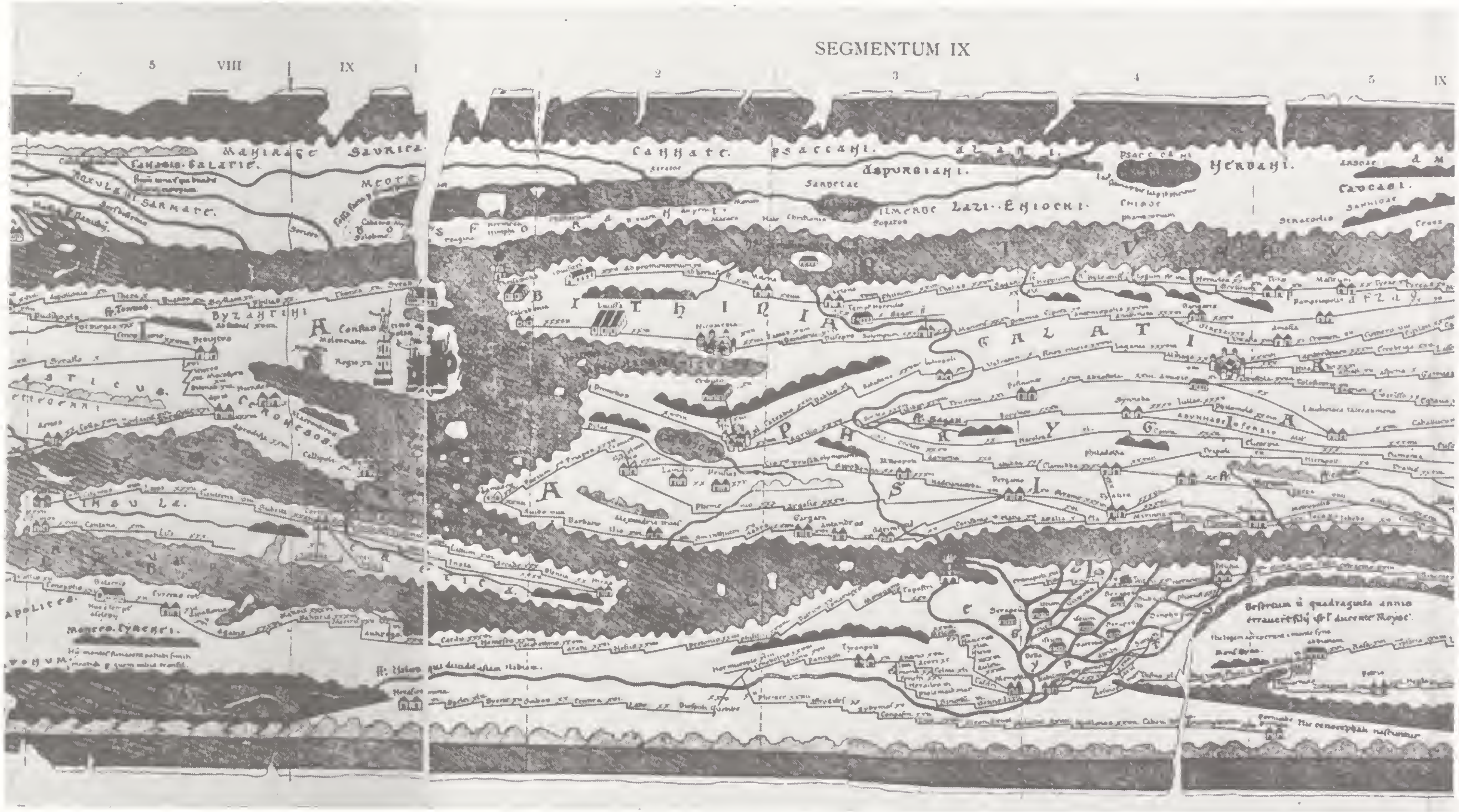
From a further letter of Pliny to Trajan (Bk. X, lxxiv) we learn another interesting detail illustrating how the emperors tried to obtain intelligence about those countries unfriendly to their empire. Pliny reports that a soldier from the police station of Nicomedia had arrested a slave who, after deserting from his master's household, sought the asylum of the emperor's statue. He was first brought before the magistrate of Nicomedia and then to Pliny, the governor of Bithynia. Pliny questioned him and learned from him that he had first been in the service of the governor of Moesia, one of the Danubian provinces, and that he became a prisoner of the king of the Dacians—the ancestors of the modern Rumanians—probably during a raid by the latter on the Roman province. The Dacian king sent the unfortunate slave as a special present to the king of Parthia, a clear indication that the Dacians were hoping for support from the Parthians in their struggle with Rome. He spent several years in Parthia, but succeeded in escaping, taking with him as a souvenir a ring bearing the image of the Parthian king in full regalia. The slave was probably an intelligent man—as otherwise the Dacian king would not have sent him as a gift to the Parthian king. Pliny realized this and thought that his experiences might be useful to the emperor, and he therefore sent him to Trajan. The latter, at that time, had decided to renew the warfare with the Parthians, and his friend Pliny knew that information about the Parthians, their king, and their lands would be welcome to the emperor.

We know little about a more systematic Roman intelligence service among or concerning the nations adjacent to the Roman Empire. It seems that here the old Roman dislike of such practices persisted also during the imperial period. This attitude is suggested by the erection of the so-called *limes*, the fortified frontier lines on the most exposed sides, especially in Britain, in Germany, on the Danube, in Armenia, and in Africa. The erection of such defensive fortifications indicates that the Romans were not interested in the barbarians surrounding their empire. When they fought against them, it was to defend their empire and to punish them for their incursions beyond the *limes*. We look in vain in Roman literature for works on exploration among foreign people before the imperial period, whereas the Greeks, particularly during the Hellenistic period, were eager to learn about the barbarians.

This difference in the mentality of the two peoples is illustrated in a particularly striking way by their attitude toward the geographical exploration of the world. We have seen how eager was Alexander the Great to encourage geographical discoveries, appreciating the importance of such intelligence in the advancement of his political and military plans. The great mass of Greek geographical writings is lost and only a few fragments have survived of the many descriptions of roads, coasts, and countries, sometimes with particular information as to distances. The most important of the ancient Greek geographers was Eratosthenes, director of the Library of Alexandria in 230–195 B.C. who wrote the first systematic work dealing with geography from a mathematical, physical, and historical angle. He is therefore rightly looked upon as the father of ancient and modern geography.

Only at the beginning of the imperial era did the Romans begin to be interested in geographical and ethnographical intelligence and discoveries for practical military and administrative purposes. Here, again, Caesar and Augustus led the way. Augustus realized Caesar's plan of mapping the roads and recording the distances between the different military stations which later became mostly those of the state post. The work was done by Agrippa. Pliny the Elder gives us in his *Natural History* (Bk. III, ii.17) the following information of the first written survey of the world made by the Romans:

> Agrippa was a very painstaking man, and also a very careful geographer; who therefore could believe that when intending to set before the eyes of Rome a survey of the world, he made a mistake, and with him the late lamented Augustus? For it was Augustus who completed the portico


SEGMENTUM IX
5
VIII
IX
1
2
3
4
5
IX

The *cursus publicus* in Constantinople, western Asia Minor, and North Africa, as depicted in Segment IX of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a 12th-century copy of an original Roman Imperial map (K. Miller, *Die Peutingersche Tafel oder Weltkarte des Cassorius*).

> containing a plan of the world that had been begun by his sister in accordance with the design and memoranda of Marcus Agrippa.

This fact reveals once more how much Augustus valued the importance of intelligence of all kinds for the administration and welfare of the empire. This first map was later copied and publicly displayed in all the major cities of the empire. Reduced copies—called *itineraria*—were made of it for the use of governors and army commanders. We are fortunate in possessing a medieval copy of a map from the imperial period (perhaps based on Augustus's map)—the Peutinger Table in the Library of Vienna—and the so-called Antonine itinerary.

Practical purposes directed further Roman geographical research. We learn again from Pliny the Elder (Bk. VI, xv.40) that generals fighting on the borders of the empire were requested to obtain as much geographical intelligence as possible on hostile countries and to send it to Rome. This was done by Corbulo, fighting in Armenia, and maps containing such intelligence were sent home from the front. Other sources of this kind of intelligence were provided by the embassies of foreign nations and the hostages of defeated kings and chiefs. Pliny (Bk. IX, viii.24) confesses that he diligently used all these sources of information to complete the knowledge of Armenia possessed by the Romans.

Another interesting story of this kind is told by Pliny when describing the geography and people of Ceylon (Bk. VI, xxiv.84 ff.):

> We obtained more accurate information [on Ceylon] during the principate of Claudius [A.D. 41–54] when an embassy actually came to Rome from the island of Ceylon. The circumstances were as follows: Annius Plocamus had obtained a contract from the Treasury to collect the taxes from the Red Sea; a freedman of his, while sailing around Arabia, was carried by gales from the north beyond the coast of Carmania, and after a fortnight made the harbor of Hippuri in Ceylon, where he was entertained with kindly hospitality by the king, and in a period of six months acquired a thorough knowledge of the language; and afterwards in reply to the king's inquiries he gave him an account of the Romans and their Emperor. The king among all that he heard was remarkably struck with admiration for Roman honesty, on the ground that among the money found on the captive the *denarii* were all equal in weight, although the various figures on them showed that they had been coined by several emperors. This strongly attracted his friendship, and he sent four envoys, the chief of whom was Rachias. From them we learnt the following facts about Ceylon.

Pliny must have misunderstood certain indications of the ambassadors, as some of the facts he relates are very inaccurate.

Pliny marks an amazing progress in Roman geographical intelligence. He is far superior to the first Roman geographer Pomponius Mela, but he cannot be compared with his Greek predecessor Strabo (born about 64/63 B.C., died about A.D. 21). Pliny, who died in A.D. 79 as one of the victims of the great eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, can be characterized only as a statistical geographer. Only on Asia is he able to give us fresh geographical intelligence.

And, again, in this respect, we find that the best geographical, ethnographical, and economic intelligence was obtained by traders in the imperial period. The best evidence of this is given by an unknown Greek trader who, ten years after Pliny's death, published his experiences in a book known as *Periplus Maris Erythraei*—"Navigation in the Erythraean Sea." This is a description of the coasts of Africa, Arabia, and India with very detailed information about the harbors and trading stations, giving important information concerning their exports and imports with the greatest accuracy, all of which has been verified by modern researches.

Ceylon and India were not the farthest points reached by traders during the imperial period. Under Marcus Aurelius merchants are said to have reached China through Tonkin, and the famous Greek geographer Ptolemy, whose work became the chief source of geographical information for the ancient and early medieval world, gives us details about the caravan routes bringing silk from China.

But these explorations were made by Greek merchants and travellers in the imperial era. The Romans limited themselves in their information service about foreign countries to the regions bordering their *limes*. But here, too, especially in so far as geographical accuracy is concerned, the Romans lacked the keen sense of observation and the imagination of the Greeks. This is illustrated by the description of Britain, Scotland, and Germany given by Tacitus (about A.D. 55–120) in his *Life of Agricola* and *Germania*. Although Tacitus, when writing of Britain and Scotland, could have learned from the experiences of his father-in-law, Agricola, who fought in that country, he simply follows Strabo in his geographical descriptions as if no progress had been made in the survey of Britain during the century which lay between the time of Strabo and his own. His geographical description of Germany is also rather vague. More interesting is the ethnographical part of this book, although his moralizing tendency may have led him to exaggerate when comparing the simple life of the Germans to the luxurious and libertine life of Imperial Rome.

The Romans must have had their own agents among the neighboring populations, whose duty it was to inform the commanders of the *limes* stations of any dangerous moves among those nations which had come to their knowledge. There is only one single piece of evidence from the fourth century, preserved by Ammianus Marcellinus (Bk. XXVIII, chs. 3, 8), from which we may conclude that agents existed. The historian mentions them for the year A.D. 368, when he speaks of their suppression in Britain by Count Theodosius. This is what he says, according to the text:

> In the midst of such important events the Arcani, a class of men established in early times, about which I said something in the history of Constans, had gradually become corrupted, and consequently he [Theodosius] removed them from their posts. For they were clearly convicted of having been led by the receipt, or the promise, of great booty at various times to betray to the savages what was going on among us. For it was their duty to hasten about hither and thither over long spaces, to give information to our generals of the clashes of rebellion among neighboring peoples.

It is a pity that Ammianus's history of the Emperor Constans is lost, for we surely would have learned more about this type of Roman intelligence agent, as Ammianus seems to have spoken in detail about them in that work. But, because he says that these agents were "established in early times," we can presume that they existed at least in the later imperial period also. They might have been chosen first from among the *frumentarii* and later, after their suppression, from among the *agentes in rebus*.

We can imagine that it was their duty to report to the commanders of the nearest garrison or of the nearest tower of the *limes* fortifications concerning their observations among the natives. These fortifications were provided with towers placed at given distances and laid with good roads. At certain points other towers linked the *limes* with the headquarters of the reserve troops. These towers were used not only for defense, but also for sending signals. However, there is little evidence concerning the existence and the functioning of this Roman signalling service. On the famous columns of the Emperors Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, on which their victories are pictured, we see soldiers signalling with flaming torches from the towers of the *limes* as a warning of the approach of the barbarians. This can be considered sufficient evidence that fire signals were introduced at last on a large scale in the Roman army during the imperial period.

The soldiers on the frontiers did not have a very attractive life when on duty. Doubtful characters gathered near the borders—again the analogy with the "bad lands" in the "Wild West" comes to mind—and we have several inscriptions from along the Roman borders in Asia which commemorate border guards who had been killed, not by the enemy, but by bandits. In order to prevent such incidents and the dangerous incursions of barbarians along the Danube and in Germany, great precautions were taken. Cassius Dio (Bk. LXXI, chs. 15, 16; LXXII, 3) discloses that the Sarmatian and Germanic tribes bordering on the Danube were asked to leave several square miles near the Roman border uninhabited and deserted, and that they were forbidden to put boats on the river. From Tacitus's *Histories* (Bk. IV, chs. 63–65) we conclude that foreigners were free to cross the frontier only in daytime, that they were asked to leave their arms at the frontier post, and that they could proceed further only under military escort for which they had to pay. Dio again tells us that trade with these tribes was permitted only at certain places and at specified times. Ammianus Marcellinus (Bk. XVIII, 8) confirms that similar arrangements existed on the Persian and Roman borders as well.

All these were security measures which betray, at the same time, that the Romans were reluctant to extend their intelligence service to foreign countries on a large scale. What took place some miles beyond the *limes* was unknown to them, unless a befriended tribe, for the sake of its own security, disclosed to the Romans the activities of the barbarians moving closer and closer to the *limes*, eager to partake of the riches which had accumulated in Roman provinces where civilization flourished. This lack of interest in detailed information as to the barbarian world was fatal to Rome, and here we find an additional reason contributing to the sudden collapse of the *limes* before the final invasion of the Germanic tribes.

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III

Byzantine Intelligence Service

1. Byzantine State Post
Innovations by Constantine and Constantius—Theodosius's Measures—Functioning of the State Post—Deterioration under Justinian—Its Collapse in the West.

2. Secret Service and Police
The *Agentes in Rebus* as Military Corps—Messengers, Inspectors of the Post—Informants, Secret Agents—Organization of the Police in Egypt and Other Provinces—Police in the Capital and Main Cities.

3. Intelligence in the Border Lands and in Enemy Territory
Akritai, Their Duties and Organization—Fire Signal System, Achievement of Basil II—Byzantine Spies—Constantine V Betrayed by the Bulgar Khagan Tzeleric—Successful Byzantine Counter-espionage in 877—A Secret Agent's Message in 913.

4. Military Intelligence
Byzantine Standing Army—Provincial Army in the *themata*—Army Scouts—Naval Intelligence—Military Police—Intelligence on New Nations in Military Treatises.

5. Diplomatic Intelligence
Priscus's Report on Hunnic Embassy—Persia, Byzantium, and Turcs, and the Control of the Silk Road to China—Cherson, Diplomatic and Information Outpost—Information Center in Constantinople, Reception of Foreign Embassies—Reports of Embassies from State Archives, Main Source of Porphyrogenitus's Work on the Administration of the Empire.

1. Byzantine State Post

The Byzantine Empire, often regarded as the heir of the Roman Empire, was rather its continuation. This continuation was more evident at the time when new invasions deprived the empire of its flourishing provinces in the East and West, definitely breaking through the Roman *limes*, which had been defended successfully for centuries by the Roman Legions. Rome found it necessary to surrender her primacy and the privilege of being the residential city of the emperors to a new Rome on the shores of the Bosporus, named Constantinople after its founder Constantine the Great. Nevertheless, that city's inhabitants, and the population of the eastern provinces, continued to think of themselves as Romans, or "Romaioi" in their native Greek language.

It should also be stressed that from the time of Constantine, the empire developed along different religious lines, and the emperors regarded themselves as appointed by God, not only to reign, but also to protect and extend the Christian religion, now victorious over the pagan gods and over those principles which had prevailed in Rome and the western provinces. These two facts inaugurated a new period in the history of the Roman Empire. The old Roman institutions, laws, organization of the provinces, and military traditions continued, however, to live and to grow in the new eastern and Christian atmosphere of this new center, the old Greek city of Byzantium which had been elevated to be the new capital. From that time on the empire can rightly be called, after the name of its capital, the residence of the emperors, the Byzantine Empire, and its new political ideology Christian Hellenism.

In time, in this new environment in which these traditions were to evolve, unforeseen events brought changes in the defensive system and in the organization of the provinces. The Latin titles of the old Roman administration can often be discerned in the Greek names of the new offices. Of course, even the Byzantine Empire had need of the old Roman organizations to ensure the peaceful development of its citizens, and to protect itself against intrigue and hostile invasions from abroad. It is thus natural to suppose that the Christian emperors, residing in Byzantium, found it necessary to continue the development of an effective intelligence service.

The basis on which the successful administration of the Roman Empire at its zenith was built was the *cursus publicus*, or the state post. This organization also made the service of intelligence more effective. No wonder, then, that the state post continued to function in the Byzantine Empire as it had in the Roman Empire.

But Constantine the Great introduced an important innovation when he extended the privilege of using it to bishops invited by him to the synods. Permission to travel at state expense was granted not only to Orthodox bishops, but also to schismatic prelates. The bishops invited to the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325) were similarly granted the privilege of travelling at the expense of the fisc. Of course, according to the Christianized Hellenistic concept of policy, the emperor, as representative of God, was responsible for ecclesiastical matters and therefore the use of the state post by the bishops was considered as being in the interests of the state.

During the reign of Constantius II (337–361), however, the frequent use of the state post by bishops whom the emperor invited from one Council to another became a great burden on the Treasury, and the pagan writer Ammianus Marcellinus complained bitterly about this misuse of state public services. Julian the Apostate (361–363) stopped it, although he himself did not hesitate to offer its use to St. Basil, with whom he had studied in Athens, when he invited him to visit his court.

The Emperor Theodosius I (379–395) restricted the use of the *cursus* even more and issued a series of laws, published in 438 in the *Code* of Theodosius II, which contained rules for the reorganization of the state post, to be used only by persons in the service of the state.

In spite of the restrictions ordered by Theodosius I, the use of the *cursus* was available also to people acquainted with the emperor, or with high functionaries at his court. Theodosius himself made it possible for his compatriot, the Spanish virgin Etheria, probably a family friend, to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Sinai by giving her the *evectio* for the use of the *cursus*. We owe to this gesture the first vivid account of a pilgrimage to Palestine, and a detailed description of the holy places, and of the interesting experiences which Etheria collected on her long journey.

Another famous private traveller on the *cursus* was St. Melania the Younger, who was given permission by Theodosius II in 436 to use the imperial post from Palestine to Constantinople to visit her uncle Volusianus. The permit to use the imperial post, which was, at the same time, a sort of passport, was called *diploma* or *tractoria* before the time of Constantine the Great. From his reign on this important document was generally called *evectio* (*synthema* in Greek). A "divine" letter of convocation by the emperor could serve in lieu of *evectio*. The right of issuing the *evectio* was a very highly coveted privilege disputed among the senior officers. At the beginning of the fifth century a certain number of passes were granted to certain high officials who were free to dispose of them during the term of their office. But the Emperor Justinian restricted the issuance of extra passes, stipulating that they could be granted only by the Emperor, the Prefect, and the Master of Offices.

The laws in the *Code* of Theodosius II give precise directions as to the administration of the imperial post, how many horses (*veredi*), mules, and oxen (*paraveredi*) should be kept in the *mansiones* and *stationes*, how great a load the *vehicules* (*rheda*) should carry, how many animals and how much fodder the inhabitants of the provinces were to deliver to the *mansiones* as special taxes.

Specially chosen inspectors had to see that these laws were carried out. All persons travelling in the interest of the state had to present their *evectio* to the employees of the *cursus*. The post, rapid on horseback, was mostly reserved for couriers who changed horses at each station. The travellers were also entitled to entertainment in the *mansiones*. One of the *tractoria* which is preserved lists many items of food to which the bearer of the *evectio* was entitled on his journey. It is a curious document revealing that the larder of the prefect of a *mansio* must have been well stocked. Few modern airport restaurants or motels could offer such a varied and abundant menu to their customers as did a *mansio* of the Roman and Byzantine state post.

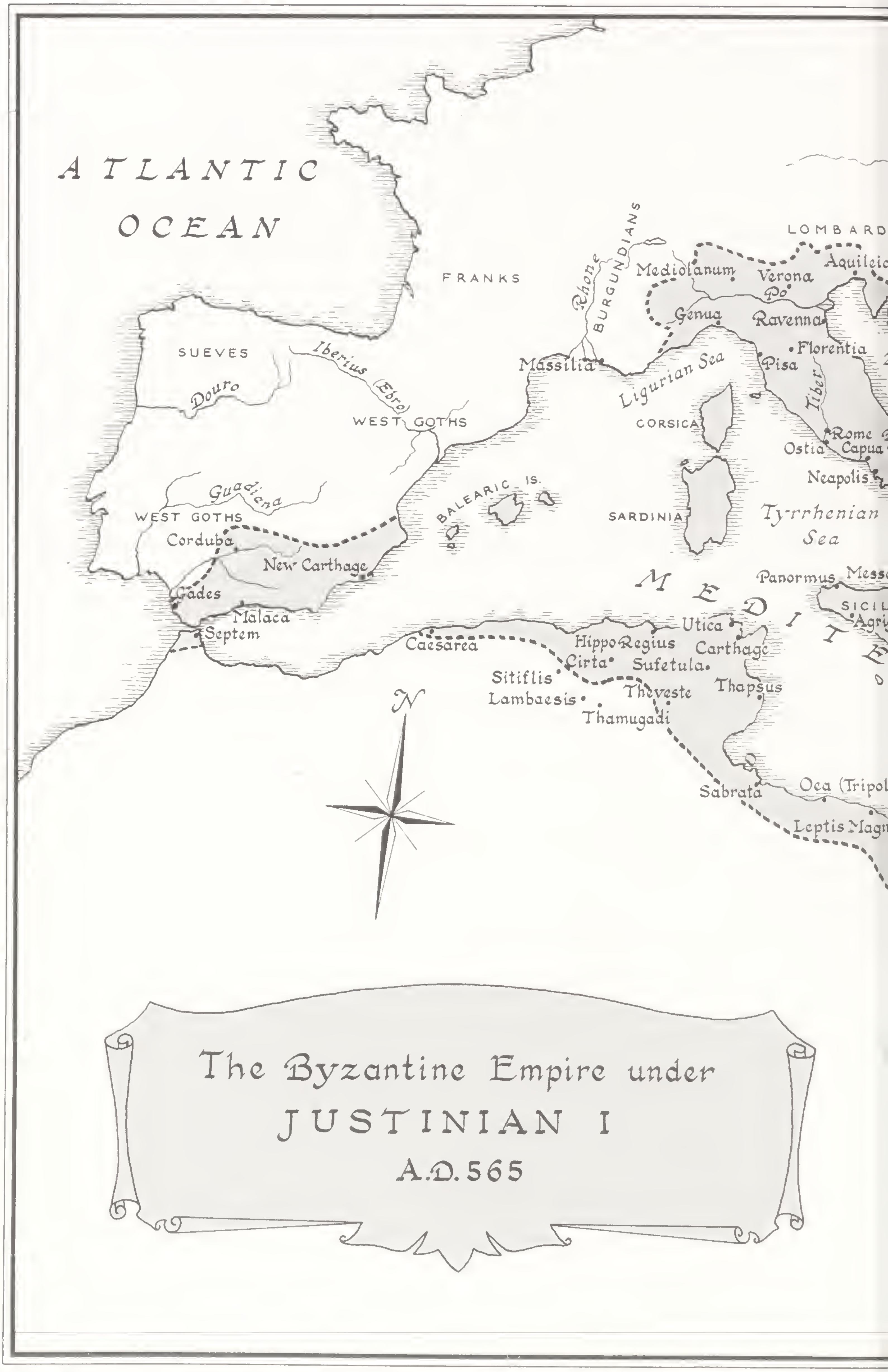
Official travellers were also able to enjoy other entertainment not provided by the prefects of the *mansiones*. We gather this from the *Life of St. Theodore*, written in the seventh century. The anonymous author mentions that the imperial road crossed a place called Sykeon, in Cappadocia, where an enterprising lady had opened a tavern. Besides offering travellers the customary refreshments, the hagiographer candidly confesses that, with her two daughters, she "practiced also the profession of courtesans." Cosmas, a messenger of the Emperor Justinian, was lured by one of the ladies, the beautiful Mary, and slept with her. During the night Mary saw in a vision a splendid star emerging from her womb, and her lover interpreted this as a sign that she would become the mother of a boy who would be famous as a saint. After this prophecy "he left her in the morning filled with great joy." In reality, the boy who was born became a monk and the Bishop of Anastasioupolis, one of the greatest miracle workers of his time—according to the hagiographer.

Thanks to the rigorous injunctions of Theodosius, the *cursus* functioned almost perfectly. The prefects of the stations seem, in general, to have been conscientious in the execution of their duties. When St. Melania the Younger, for example, arrived in Tripolis on her way to Constantinople, the commander of the station, Messala, refused to provide her with all the means for her journey which she thought necessary. He argued that many of her companions were not in possession of an *evectio*, and that he could provide her only with a limited number of animals and carriages. The saint, in desperation, gave him three gold pieces. This was of help, but the conscience of the official, stirred up by the reproaches of his wife who reminded him that the emperor might learn of his dishonesty, induced Messala to ride after the cortège and to return the three gold pieces to the saint with many excuses and explanations.

Since the companions of Melania appeared surprised by this exhibition of honesty, it would seem that not all commanders of the stations were equally conscientious. Actually, we learn from Theodosius's *Code* that the inspectors, called *curiosi*, were instructed to detain and report to the Prefect and to the Master of Offices any persons using the post illegally, or who exceeded the privileges granted to them in their *evectio*. Such trespassing could hardly have been possible without the complicity of the commanders of the stations, and this kind of abuse continued in spite of the strict measures outlined in the Theodosian *Code*. Justinian issued an order specifying that only trespassers of high rank were to be reported to the office of the Master, while that of the Prefect dealt with offenders of lower rank.

The officers of the imperial post were not permitted to carry private correspondence. There were cases, however, when prominent people succeeded in using the post for their own correspondence. St. Basil, for example, was able to slip invitations to Orthodox bishops bidding them to an important synod into the official bag carrying state papers, and thus made sure that his letters would arrive in time and in safety. On another occasion, he succeeded in handing a letter to an official who was using the imperial post. St. Jerome also confessed that he was fortunate enough to pass a letter addressed to a rich man named Julian to an officer going on an official journey. This was made easier by the fact that the officer was Julian's brother. Such cases, however, seem to have been rare. The *cursus* served only the interests of the state and its employees handled only official correspondence. Rich citizens and clerics used either their own messengers, or professional couriers (*tabellarii*).

The system of the imperial post functioned well into the reign


The Byzantine Empire under JUSTINIAN I A.D. 565

ATLANTIC
OCEAN
FRANKS
SUEVES
Douro
Iberius (Ebro)
WEST GOTHS
Guadiana
WEST GOTHS
Corduba
New Carthage
Gades
Malaca
Septem
BALEARIC IS.
Rhone
BURGUNDIANS
Mediolanum
Massilia
Genua
Ligurian Sea
CORSICA
SARDINIA
LOMBARD
Verona
Po
Aquilei
Ravenna
Florentia
Pisa
Tiber
Rome
Ostia
Capua
Neapolis
Tyrrhenian Sea
MEDITE
Panormus
Messe
SICIL
Agri
Caesarea
Hippo Regius
Utica
Carthage
Cirta
Sufetula
Sitiflis
Lambaesis
Theveste
Thamugadi
Thapsus
Sabrata
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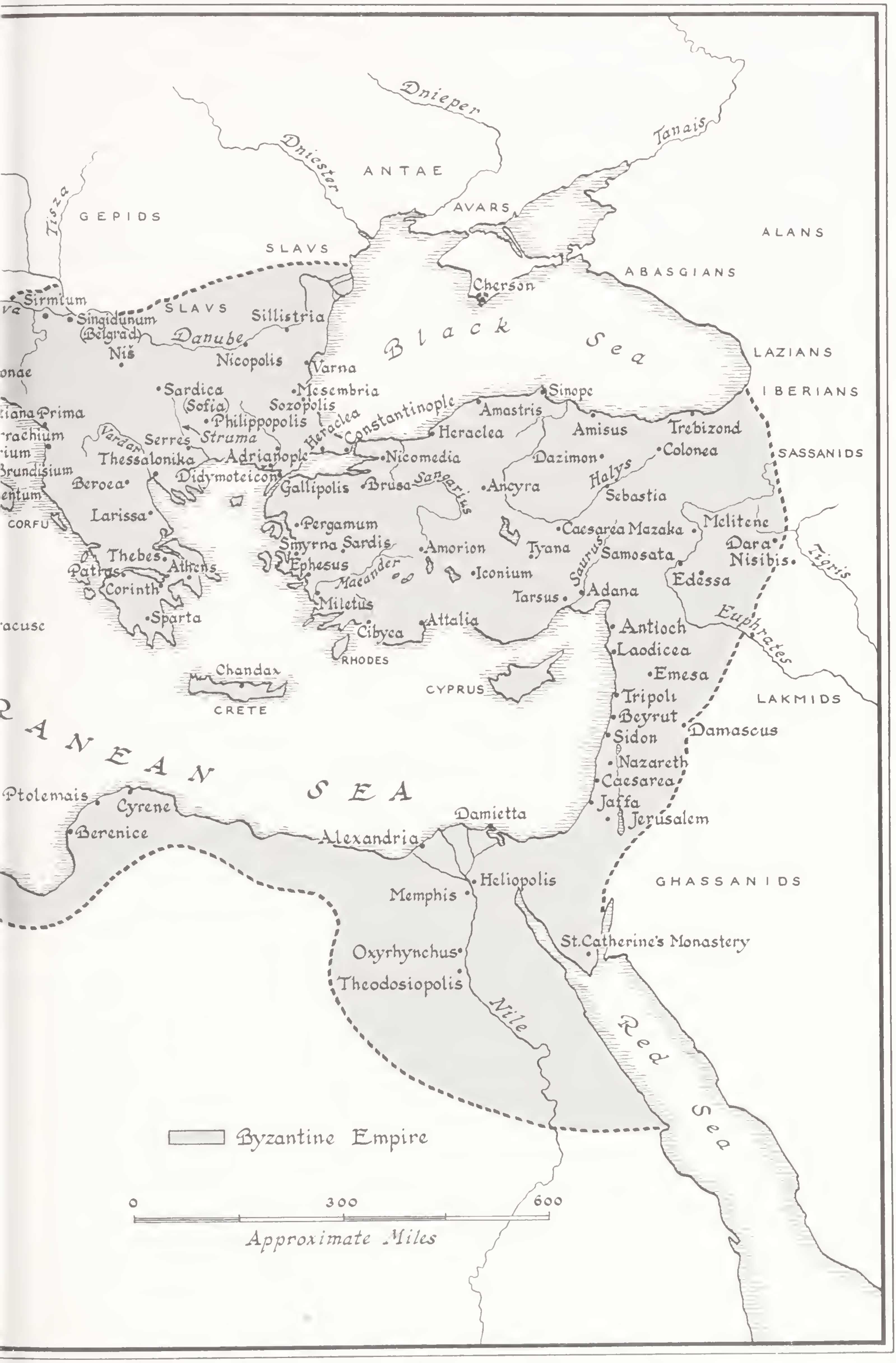

Dnieper
Dniester
ANTAE
Tanais
Tisza
GEPIDS
AVARS
ALANS
SLAVS
ABASGIANS
Cherson
Sirmium
Singidunum (Belgrad)
SLAVS
Sillistria
Danube
Niš
Nicopolis
Varna
Black Sea
LAZIANS
IBERIANS
Sardica (Sofia)
Mesembria
Sozopolis
Sinope
Philippopolis
Heraclea
Constantinople
Amastris
Amisus
Trebizond
Vardar
Serres
Struma
Heraclea
Colonea
SASSANIDS
Thessalonika
Adrianople
Nicomedia
Dazimon
Didymoteicon
Halys
Beroea
Gallipolis
Brusa
Sangarius
Ancyra
Sebastia
Larissa
CORFU
Pergamum
Caesarea Mazaka
Melitene
Smyrna
Sardis
Amorion
Tyana
Dara
Thebes
Athens
Ephesus
Samosata
Nisibis
Tigris
Patras
Maeander
Iconium
Edessa
Corinth
Saurus
Adana
Tarsus
Miletus
Sparta
Attalia
Antioch
Euphrates
Cibyca
RHODES
Laodicea
Chandax
Emesa
CRETE
CYPRUS
Tripoli
LAKMIDS
Beyrut
Damascus
Sidon
Nazareth
Caesarea
Jaffa
Jerusalem
Ptolemais
Cyrene
SEA
Damietta
Berenice
Alexandria
Heliopolis
GHASSANIDS
Memphis
St. Catherine's Monastery
Oxyrhynchus
Theodosiopolis
Nile
Red Sea
Byzantine Empire
0
300
600
Approximate Miles

of Justinian. The rapidity with which important messages were carried to the emperors is praised by contemporary writers. The church historian Socrates (VII, 19) reports that in 421 a messenger brought the news of a victory over the Persians in Armenia, near Lake Van, to Constantinople in three days. Procopius, when describing in his *Anecdota* (30) the imperial post in Justinian's time, says that the couriers were able to ride in one day a distance which ordinarily would have taken ten days. Each station kept forty horses, the best mounts being reserved for the couriers. We have documentary evidence showing that, in the sixth century, men using the imperial post could travel from Rome to Constantinople in one month, and that this distance could be shortened to twenty-four days if necessary. In general, the messengers, changing horses at each relay post, could travel from forty to forty-five miles in twenty-four hours. Theoretically the speed could be increased, but practically speaking, such a performance would be regarded as satisfactory even in urgent cases. Drivers of light, speedy coaches, with changes at the relays, could cover a distance of twenty-four miles in twenty-four hours, and the average speed on the *cursus publicus* in the Byzantine period was the same as in Roman times. Generally, however, such travelling was slowed down both by the endurance of beasts and men, and by the condition of the roads, which were not always in good repair.

The importance of this institution to the state was also appreciated by the barbarian kings established in Roman provinces. Theodoric the Great (489–526), King of the Ostrogoths and ruler of Italy, took good care of the Italian *cursus* during his reign. The kings of the Vandals, after establishing their rule over Roman Africa, also continued to keep the post in good order. Unfortunately, after the reconquest of Africa by Justinian (534), the imperial post in this land seems to have been suppressed.

Justinian is also responsible for curtailing the imperial post in the eastern part of the empire. He left in its entirety only the post road through Asia Minor, which connected Constantinople with Persia, limiting however, the *cursus* from Chalcedon to a port in Bithynia from which the messages had to be forwarded to the capital by boat. This, of course, slowed down the state service considerably. Instead of horses, asses were used on the *cursus* through Asia Minor and Syria, and the number of stations was reduced.

From that time on, the organization of the post gradually deteriorated. This was due mostly to the incursions of barbarians into Byzantine provinces. In the seventh century, the roads of the *cursus* *publicus* were ruined in Illyricum by the invasions of Avars and Slavs, in Italy by the Lombards, and in Asia Minor by the Persians and Arabs. In spite of this destruction, however, the post continued to function, although on a diminished scale.

Some improvements seem to have been accomplished in the ninth century. The delegates sent to the Council of Constantinople in 869 were able on their return to use the *Via Egnatia* which connected Constantinople with Thessalonika and Dyrrachium, although they needed a military escort. Venice seems to have become the agent for the transmission of imperial letters from Greece to western Europe. The maritime connection between Dyrrachium and Bari, in Italy, also seems to have functioned at that period.

In spite of this, communications were difficult. We learn that, in the tenth century, it took twenty-two days to reach Sicily from Rome. Liutprand, the ambassador to Nicephorus Phocas from Otto the Great took three months for the return journey from Constantinople to Italy, but this may have been an exception. Liutprand was rather indiscreet during his stay in the capital, and because of his behavior received little help from the imperial services on his return journey.

It seems that after the defeat of the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon (927), the Byzantines were able to reopen the *cursus publicus* from Constantinople to Thessalonika and Belgrad. We deduce this from the description given by Constantine VII in ch. 42 of his book *On the Administration of the Empire*. From the Danube to Cherson in the Crimea, a road ran through the territory of the Turkic Pechenegues, and this was also open to the Byzantines when they enjoyed friendly relations with these new nomads in the steppes of southern Russia.

2. Secret Service and Police

Although, as is shown in Chapter II, the evident corruption of the imperial police force in the hands of the so-called *frumentarii* had forced Diocletian to suppress this organization, it soon became necessary to institute another system to keep peace and order in the empire, and to convey the commands and decrees of the emperor to the magistrates in the provinces. Such an organization was soon created, perhaps by Diocletian himself, or perhaps by Constantine; the men to whom these duties were entrusted were called *agentes in rebus*—agents of public affairs. These *agentes in rebus* are mentioned for the first time by Constantine in one of his decrees of 319, the text of which reveals that the new agents were regarded as soldiers and formed a special *schola* (corps) which was different from other military formations. Like the imperial guards, they were expected to live in the palace in order to be at the disposal of the emperor at any time. They wore military uniform, were divided into five grades with regular promotions like the military, and the duration of their active service was defined as it was for members of the army.

Their number varied and was augmented, or restricted, according to the wishes of the emperors, and of administrative needs. During the reign of Constantine and Constantius their number seems to have grown to several hundreds, but Julian, moved by the complaints voiced by the people of the provinces who had been grossly exploited by the *agentes*, limited their number to seventeen. This restriction lasted only during his reign. We learn from the *Code* of Theodosius II that at this time the *schola* of the *agentes* was authorized to keep on its rolls eleven hundred and twenty-four members, whereas during the reign of Leo I their number had been increased to twelve hundred and forty-eight. Besides these there was a long waiting-list of candidates, called *supernumerarii*, ready to fill the vacancies which occurred in the ranks of the regulars.

According to decrees contained in the *Code* of Theodosius, admission to the corps of the *agentes* was not easy. The candidates were examined as to their ability, moral behavior, and the social status of their families. The emperors themselves granted the appointments. They were given five years to prove their usefulness and capability, and advancement to higher ranks in the corps was strictly regulated; they retired after twenty-five years of active service.

Admission to the corps was controlled by the Master of Offices, under whose care was also placed the accredited roll of the *agentes*. Moreover, he was expected to inquire into the efficiency and ability of members of the corps, and to supervise their promotion and the conferring of honors upon them according to their industry and capability, although advancement was made regularly on the basis of seniority. He also enforced the imperial regulations regarding the corps and exercised judicial authority over it.

The duties of the *agentes* were multiform, their primary function being the dispatch of imperial decrees and orders to the magistrates in the provinces. For this purpose they used, of course, the roads of the imperial post, and the directors of the *mansiones* were ordered to have the best mounts ready for them at all times. During this service as messenger, the agent was entitled to be accompanied by a groom. He may also have had to care for the safety of the imperial messenger. The groom rode a horse called *parhippus*. To be given a guard on horseback was a privilege which was seldom accorded to other users of the *cursus publicus*. The directors of the *mansiones* also provided the messengers with food which the *agentes* consumed on horseback in order not to lose time in an emergency. The imperial messengers were called *veredarii*—*angeliaforoi* in Greek, or, conveyors of orders.

From Constantius on the *agentes in rebus* were entrusted with the surveillance of the functioning of the *cursus publicus*. Before Constantine's reign the imperial post was controlled by the Praetorian Prefects, who acted through officers called *praefecti vehiculorum*, or superintendents of stage service. Constantius supplanted them, however, by officers called *praepositi cursus publici* or heads of the imperial post. Their duty was to inspect the *evectiones* or passes, and because of their functions they were popularly called *curiosi* (inquisitive people), which appellation became their official title about 381. Because the *curiosi* were chosen from the corps of the *agentes in rebus*, or imperial agents, who were under the direction of the Master of Offices, this high functionary appropriated the right of the Prefects to accord and supervise the passes. He selected the *curiosi* and dispatched them to different provinces. However, the Praetorian Prefect retained the duty of overseeing the maintenance of roads and stations, for which the provincial governors were responsible. The inspectors were appointed on the birthday of the emperors and remained in this service no longer than one year. In the beginning, only one *curiosus* was sent to each province; later any number of these inspectors could be dispatched.

The Master of Offices controlled the use of the state post until the eighth century. However, the head of the *curiosi*, an officer prominent in the Master's bureau, gradually became the most important agent in the surveillance of the use of the state post, overshadowing the power of the Master himself, and in the eighth century the direction of the post ceased to be a part of the Master's duties. A new office arose from that of the first *curiosus*, and its head was called *Logothete* of the Post (*logothetes tou dromou*).

The *agentes* also supervised the execution of imperial orders and the regular functioning of the administration. From among the highest grade of their corps were chosen the *principes*, who were sent as heads of the *officia*—or bureaus—of the prefects, and of the most important civil governors in all provinces, to denounce any suspicion of attempts at conspiracy against the emperors, to arrest spies, and to bring the culprits or suspects before the magistrates. Any special mission could be entrusted to them by the emperor or by the Master of Offices. They sometimes served as envoys to foreign rulers in matters of minor importance. The emperors employed them to spy on persons suspected of disloyalty. In this way they truly formed a secret police in the interior of the empire. This function must have been entrusted to them from the beginning of their existence and probably continued until the fourteenth century, as we learn from a fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript kept in Madrid, illustrating the history of Skylitzes. In it, the artist depicts two spies, sent by the Emperor Leo VI, eavesdropping on the conversation of two people suspected of machinations against the emperor.

The *agentes*'s special concern comprised the provinces near the frontier of the empire; they also supervised the administration of the private property of the emperors. Some seals of the twelfth century show us that even after the reorganization of the administration of the empire into *themata*, the *agentes* were sent to the new administrative divisions to supervise their proper functioning. In addition, the *agentes* claimed the right to supervise the ports and the merchant navy—a function, however, which was not granted to them. Because of its far-reaching authority, one can imagine that this secret police force exercised a great influence on the administration of the empire, and that its members very often took advantage of their position. Imperial decrees decried these abuses and the population suffered under the grasp of the imperial secret police. In time the corps of the *agentes* degenerated in Byzantium as did that of the *frumentarii* in the Roman Empire, but the secret police force was not suppressed. The safety of the emperors and the empire depended too much on its existence.

Besides the *agentes*, the emperor had at his disposal a special corps taken from the *excubitores*, or the palace guard, called *scribones*. They were often to play an important role in the history of the empire, as the emperor entrusted them with certain missions of special confidence.

The men especially responsible for the personal safety of the emperor were his *cubicularii*, and they were in charge of the imperial apartments. The history of one of them gives us an insight into the intrigues which frequently endangered the safety of the sovereign, and of the means by which loyal imperial agents disposed of dangerous persons, who were often highly placed. It illustrates, too, the unscrupulous methods by which traitorous plots were brought to light and the conspirators undone.

Samonas was an Arab prisoner and a eunuch who became a Christian and was in the service of the Zautzes family. When the

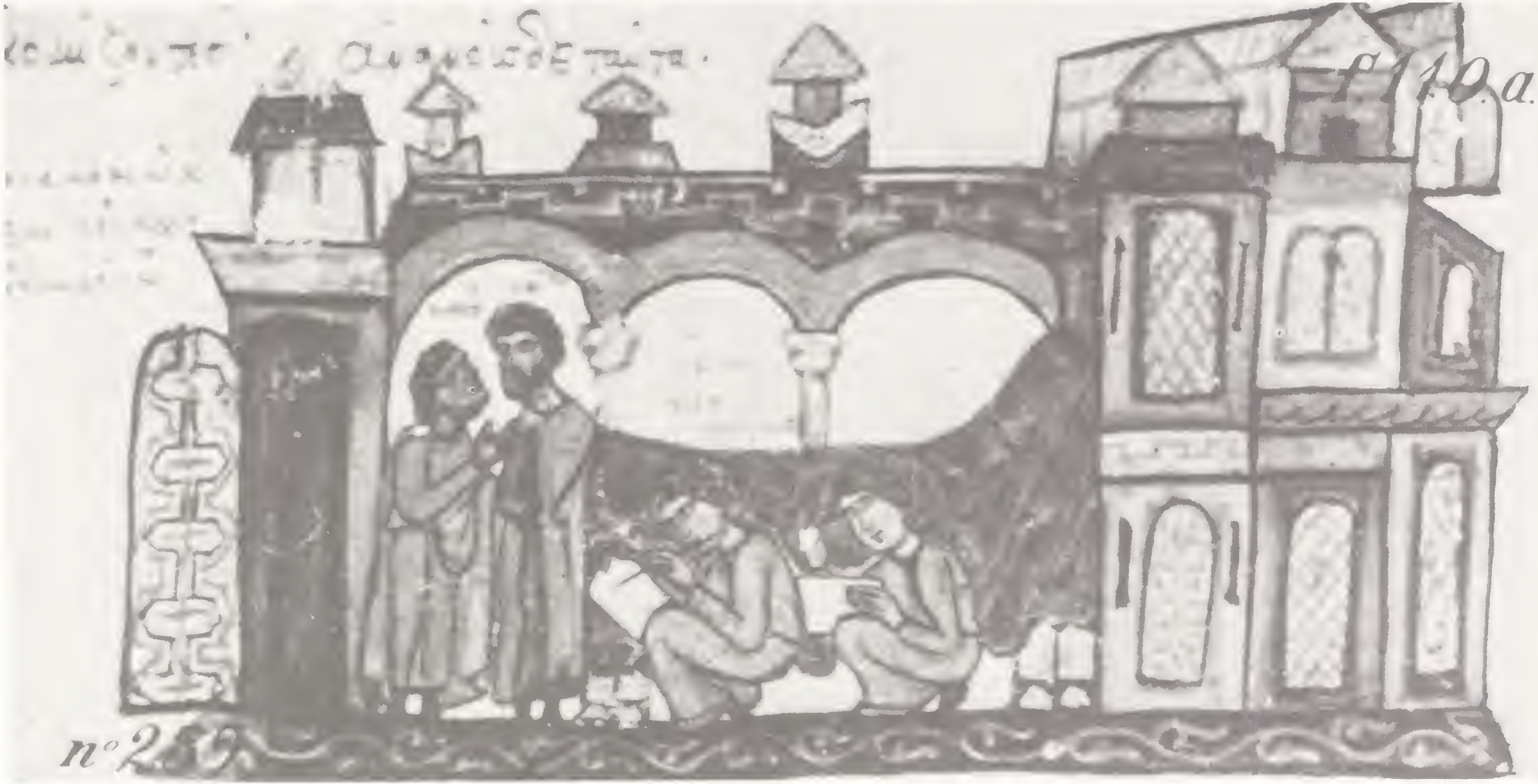
Empress Zoë, daughter of Zautzes, died, the family, fearing that they would lose the high positions which they occupied at the palace, plotted secretly against the Emperor Leo VI, intending to replace him with a member of their own family. Samonas was let in on the secret, as a servant of the family. The eunuch, however, remained loyal to the emperor, perhaps for selfish reasons, and, betraying his employers, revealed the plot to the emperor. Cunningly he secured the conviction and punishment of the conspirators.

For this service Leo VI made him his *cubicularius*. Samonas soon found another opportunity of proving his loyalty to the emperor by uncovering and bringing to nought another treacherous plot more dangerous than that devised by the Zautzes family. Two powerful and influential aristocrats, Eustace Argyrus and Andronicus Ducas, planned a revolt against Leo. Andronicus was to become emperor with the help of the Arab navy. Eustace, the Lord Admiral, resolved to betray the emperor, help the Arab fleet approach the capital, and assist them in capturing it. The plotters also secured the assistance of the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus. The latter found himself in a dilemma, as he must either recognize or refuse to recognize the fourth marriage of Leo with Zoë Karbonopsina. All three previous wives of the emperor had died without giving him an heir, but the Orthodox Church at that time only recognized three marriages as legal, regarding a fourth as sinful and uncanonical. If the revolt dethroned Leo, the patriarch's problem would be solved, and this seems to have been the main reason why he joined the conspirators.

In order to gain Arab naval support for the occupation of the capital, it was necessary to grant some maritime concessions to the Saracens. Eustace the Admiral was chosen to accomplish this by permitting the Arabs to win a few battles. In 902 the loss of Taormina in Sicily to the Arabs of Africa is ascribed by the *Continuator* of George Monachus to the treachery of Eustace and his officer Caramalus. Both were brought to the capital and condemned to death by the emperor, but on the intervention of the patriarch the sentence was remitted and both were interned as monks in a monastery. In the meantime, Lemnos was captured by the Arabs without opposition from the disorganized Byzantine navy. Samonas must have discovered at this time that a dangerous plot existed, instigated by these two powerful aristocratic families of Argyrus and Ducas, and supported also by the patriarch. An unsuccessful attempt on the life of the emperor was made in church, and the behavior of the patriarch on this occasion looked suspicious. Samonas seems to have been convinced that the plot was soon to be implemented. It was important to learn by what means the Arabs would support the revolt, and Samonas therefore volunteered to discover the information himself. He was, of course, an Arab and his father, a resident of Melitene, was probably in constant touch with his son in the imperial service. He had met his son Samonas in Constantinople when he was a member of an Arab embassy in 908. Under the pretext of being sent to the *strategus* of Cyprus for information, Samonas left the capital. He pretended to betray the emperor and, with his own horses, rode through the imperial post to the Arab frontier. In order to convince the Arabs that he was a traitor he was pursued by two imperial officers who, however, were unable to catch up with him as Samonas himself had mutilated the horses of the relays to slow down the pursuit. He succeeded in riding through the territory under the command of the conspirators, but when he came to the bridge which spanned the river Halys, he was stopped by a colonel in the service of the Argyrus. In vain he took another road, pretending to make a pilgrimage to a famous shrine nearby. The colonel had meanwhile informed his superior of his suspicions concerning the journey of Samonas, and the latter was arrested by Constantine, son of Andronicus Argyrus. Andronicus brought Samonas back to Constantinople. The emperor, who had approved Samonas's plan, was very embarrassed and tried in vain to obtain a promise from the captor not to divulge the incident. He found himself forced to imprison Samonas for a short time, but "pardoned" him soon afterwards.

In the meantime, the Arab navy moved against Constantinople. Andronicus Argyrus commanded the imperial army under the walls of the capital. Eustace, again in command of the Byzantine fleet, furthered his treachery by allowing the Arab fleet to remain unmolested. At the last moment Samonas convinced the emperor that Eustace was a traitor. The command of the fleet was transferred to Himerius, and Andronicus was ordered to embark his troops and sail under Himerius's orders against the Arabs. Andronicus was in a quandary mercilessly exploited by Samonas, who wrote a letter in which he disclosed to Andronicus that his plot was discovered and that he would be seized and blinded if he obeyed the emperor's order. A secret agent delivered the letter to Andronicus who, of course, refused to obey the emperor's command.

With his small navy Himerius succeeded in preventing the Arabs from approaching the capital, but he could not prevent them from sacking Thessalonika. Andronicus, declared a rebel, took refuge in his hill-fort of Kabala with his fellow conspirators. But his cause



Basil, one of the conspirators of the Zautzes family, explains their plot to Samonas, while, to their right, two spies of the Emperor Leo VI eavesdrop and take notes (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 110a).

was not yet lost. He had many supporters in the capital with whom he corresponded through his own secret agents. Among them was the patriarch. Samonas was promoted to eunuch patrician and *proto-vestiary* for his services. The government invited Andronicus to give himself up with the promise of a full pardon, but he refused.

However, Samonas had his secret agents even at Kabala. They obtained access to the rebel's private correspondence; one of them succeeded in collecting all the letters sent to him by his allies in the capital, and brought them to the emperor. Upon learning that his accomplices were betrayed, Andronicus decided to flee to the Arabs. The caliph promised him help and sent a detachment of his army to receive Andronicus, who was pursued by a government force. The Arabs defeated the imperial soldiers and brought Andronicus and his family and friends from Kabala to Baghdad where he was well received by the caliph.

Although in the enemy's land, Andronicus was still a danger. He had many friends in the eastern *themata* and, supported by the Arab navy, he could still attempt his goal. In order to compromise him with the Arabs, Samonas invented a very clever stratagem. He instructed the imperial secretary to write a letter, highly compromising for Andronicus in his present situation, and it was signed in purple ink by the emperor. An Arab prisoner was freed and told to take the letter, which was rolled into a spill and hidden in a wax candle, to Andronicus. The Arab agent, thinking that the emperor was friendly with Andronicus, promised to carry the candle secretly to him. Samonas, however, convinced the Arab that the letter contained threats to Islam and recommended him to give it to the vizir of the caliph. He did so and thus brought about the ruin of Andronicus and his friends. They were thrown into prison and saved their lives only by abjuring their religion.

Andronicus's fellow conspirator, Eustace, in exile, was called back and given the command of his Asian *thema*, but was carefully watched. In desperation he moved to join Andronicus in the Arab lands. Samonas's agents followed him, arrested him near the Arab frontier, and poisoned him. Thus ended the dangerous plot. As concerns the patriarch, he was shown the compromising letter he had sent to Andronicus and, in order to save himself, was forced to overrule his conscience concerning the fourth marriage of the emperor. He blessed the expectant mother, Leo's mistress Zoë, and baptized the child with all solemnity, the future Emperor Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus—born to the purple. Byzantine writers, George Monachus, the *Continuator* of Theophanes, Symeon Magister, and the biographer of Euthymius report this plot, although, of course, each has his own version of the story. The whole plot was "rediscovered" and brilliantly described by the late Professor R. J. H. Jenkins.

The corps of the *agentes* can be described, in some way, as the secret service of the state; aside from this corps, however, no autonomous organism which could be called central state police existed in Byzantium. The senior functionary in each judiciary or administrative field possessed his own police organization through which he transmitted and enforced his orders. This was especially the case with the governors of the provinces, and later on with the *logothete* of the post, and the *strateges* of the *themes*. Unfortunately we know very little of how this provincial and local police force was organized.

Only in Egypt do we find documentary evidence on this subject, thanks to the great number of papyri which record appeals to the administrative body, as well as private contracts and documents of different kinds. From these we can reconstruct, at least partially, the police organization of the province, as well as its functioning in the different towns.

The chief of police over the whole province of Egypt was the duke. He had at his command soldiers who ensured public order and protected the tax-collectors. In the *eparchies* (counties) of the province the prefect of police was the *praeses*, entitled to give orders for the arrest and imprisonment of transgressors. From the instructions given by Justinian in his Edict XIII to the *praeses* of Libya, we gain some insight into the functioning of the local police. The *praeses* appointed a representative with power to arrest all rioters and agitators from Alexandria seeking refuge in his territory. He could do so on his own authority, or he could extradite them to the office of the duke, when requested by his special envoy. To accomplish this he had at his disposal not only his own functionaries, employees of his office, but also a company of fifty soldiers whom he could detach from the local garrison.

This concession is important, for its shows us that the maintenance of public order in Egypt was one of the duties of the army. This seems to be confirmed, moreover, by the distribution of troops in the province. They were garrisoned over the whole country, even in places of no strategic importance. This can be explained only by the role that the army played in Egypt as guardians of public order and as collectors of taxes.

The cities also had their police. The chief of police of the city was called *defensor* (defender), and he commanded a corps of policemen called *riparii*. Originally the latter were probably supervisors of the proper working of the irrigation dikes that conducted water from the Nile into the farmlands. In the sixth century their activity was extended to policing the cities. They had to maintain public order, arrest persons accused of violating the law, and conduct them to the tribunal. Their duty was also to assist the judges in the execution of their sentences. They were supervised by a captain and were assisted by couriers. The *irenarchs* mentioned in certain papyri seem sometimes to be identified with the *riparii*, but their special function cannot be clearly defined. It is not quite clear if the *riparii* were remunerated for their services, or if the function was a *liturgia*, or service in the interest of the community (to which some wealthy citizens were obligated). Guardians of cities and their chiefs are also mentioned in the papyri. They do not seem to be identified with the *riparii*. An organization of local police also existed in the villages. It functioned under the direction of the *riparii*, who also possessed some judicial powers, and who examined the complaints of the villagers. If an accused man refused their arbitration, they sent him to the city to the tribunal of the *defensor*.

Ordinarily the chiefs of the villages ordered the arrest of suspected trespassers, and had at their disposal the local police. In cases where local chiefs and their police neglected to give orders for the arrest of malefactors, or were unable to enforce their orders, it was necessary to appeal to the military tribune of the nearest garrison, who would then send a military patrol to restore order.

In addition to the local police there also existed night watchmen who probably came under the command of the *riparii*, at least in the cities. The guards of the fields played an important role, namely, the surveillance of the dikes and of the irrigation of the fields. Shepherds watched over the domestic animals of the villagers, and both of these minor police duties were supervised by the *riparii*. It seems that the settlements were divided into blocs, each of which had its own guards and shepherds.

Special provisions prevailed in the desert regions. In order to protect the caravans from attack by bandits, fortified towers manned by watchmen were erected at certain distances. Of course, large individual estates often had their own *riparii*, shepherds and guards of the fields, whom the owners maintained out of their own funds.

We also have some evidence concerning municipal administration and policing in the capital. The prefect of the city, called *eparchos*, held a very high position among the imperial officers, as he represented the emperor in the city, and was commander of the urban police. From the fourth century on he held in his hands the civil and criminal administration in Constantinople and its suburbs up to a distance of one hundred miles. He received as well appeals from neighboring provinces, and in the ninth century he became the supreme judge in the empire. He was not only responsible for guarding the city, but had also to watch over its economic prosperity; for this purpose he enjoyed wide economic and commercial jurisdiction over all professional establishments in the city. His rights are described in the *Book of the Prefect*, attributed to the Emperor Leo VI (tenth century). The work, however, merely codifies usages which had been current in the past.

His Office was composed of numerous personnel, headed by two first chancellors. The inspectors of the workshops, shops, and commercial establishments were free to enter any workshop or store at any time to ascertain that the rules of the *eparchos* concerning the nature of production and of prices were being strictly observed.

The city was divided into fourteen districts headed by chiefs; at their disposal were policemen and firemen (*vigiles*, *nyctophylakes*), commanded by the prefect of the *vigiles* called *nycteparchos*. Justinian improved on this organization in 532 by replacing the prefect by a *praetor* of the people who had at his disposal an assessor and a tribunal of justice, with twenty soldiers and thirty firemen.

In 539, Justinian created another police post presided over by a *quaesitor*. He was in charge of a kind of immigration office which surveyed the influx of population from the countryside and from foreign countries, and which sent back undesirable individuals. In the ninth century this function was exercised by the *quaestor sacri palatii*, who had his own court and extensive judicial authority.

This arrangement seems to have operated quite well. Liutprand of Cremona, who had visited Byzantium twice as envoy of King Berengar and of the Emperor Otto I, mentions in his *Antapodosis* (Tit-for-Tat, I, chs. 11, 12), that during the night soldiers were posted at every crossroad to keep watch and ward. They were under orders to arrest any suspicious person roaming the streets, give him a whipping, imprison him, and bring him up for public trial the next day. Then he tells an anecdote about Emperor Leo VI, who, determined to test the fidelity of the guards, left his palace one night unattended, and pretended to visit a brothel. He was arrested at two guardposts, but the guards, after being bribed, let him go. The guardians of the third guardpost, however, refused the bribe, thrashed him well, put him into irons and thrust him into prison. The next morning the emperor persuaded the jailor to take him to the palace, where he was recognized, much to the jailor's astonishment. The emperor then punished the policemen of the first two guardposts and rewarded the men of the third for their trustworthiness. Basil I seems to have appointed special judges in each street who acted as commissars of the police.

There were, of course, other municipal servicemen, especially those charged with the lighting of the city streets, and men to oversee the regular functioning of the aqueducts and the distribution of grain to the populace. The provincial cities imitated the police arrangements of the capital. They were, however, beginning to lose the freedom of their curial organization, especially since the creation of the *themata*. The *strateges* resided in the cities and gradually took over the surveillance of the police and civil administration. They had at their command soldiers whose main garrisons were in the leading cities.

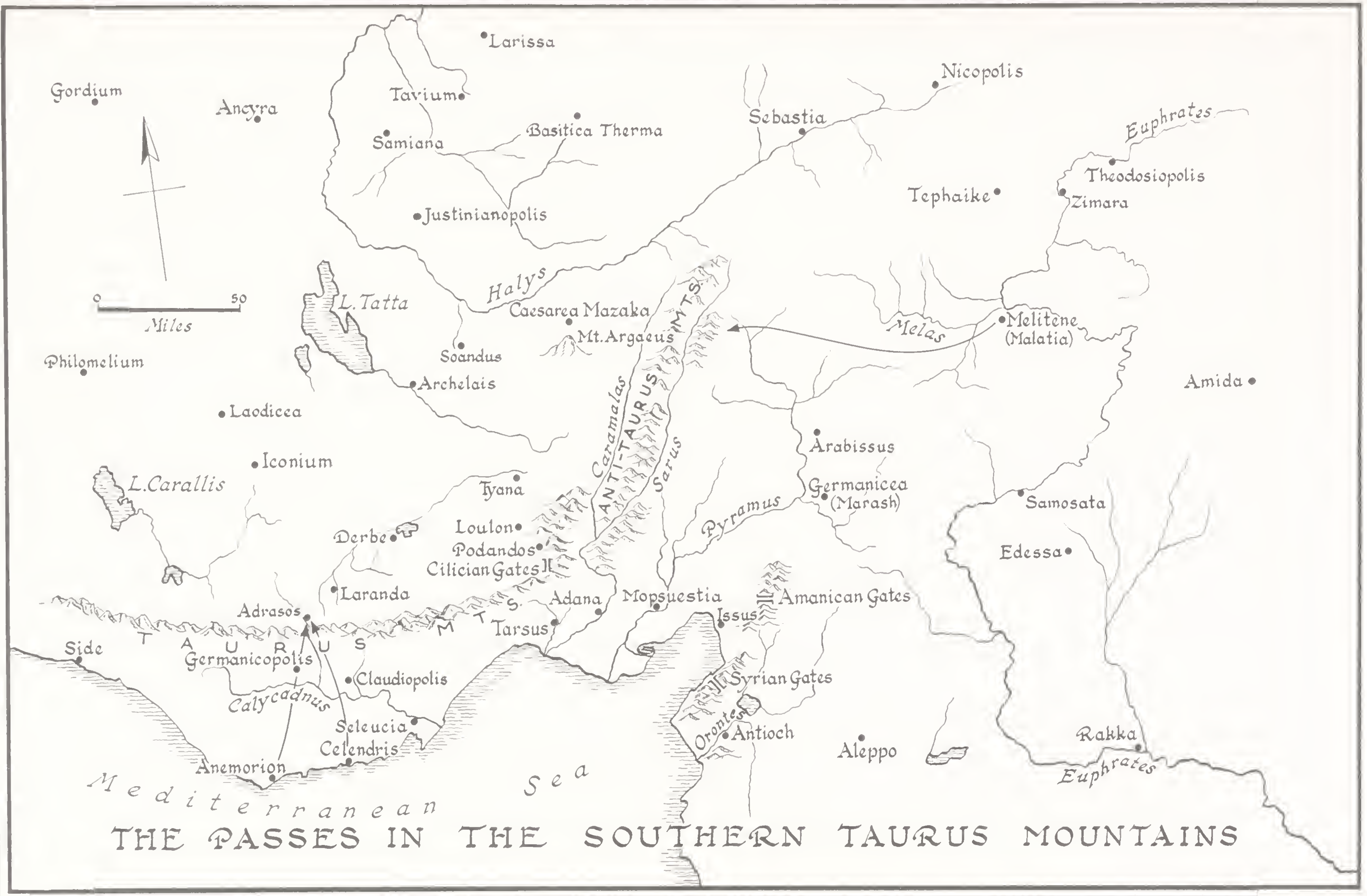
3. Intelligence in the Border Lands and in Enemy Territory

Thanks to the normal functioning of the state post and to the service of the *agentes* as messengers and informers, the imperial government received its intelligence extremely swiftly. However, this was insufficient when trouble originated near the frontier and speedy counteraction seemed necessary. The conflicts with Persia, and later with the Arabs, made it vital for the emperors and their armies to secure information quickly concerning events in Asia Minor, especially near the Persian or Arab frontier. After the collapse of the Persian Empire, the Arabs threatened the Byzantine possessions in Asia Minor, especially during the ninth and tenth centuries. Therefore, it became necessary to introduce special measures.

The surveillance of the border lands in Asia Minor was entrusted to a special guard corps called *akritai*, chosen from among the finest soldiers, who were the successors of the *limitanei* of the Roman Empire. Their duty was to be on the alert for trouble in the border lands, to prevent penetration of enemy spies and secret agents into Byzantine territory, to collect intelligence of all kinds about the enemy, and to transmit it to the capital.

In order to obtain this intelligence they spied on the enemy guards, harassed them, made raids into enemy territory, and took prisoners in order to discover as much intelligence as they could about the plans of their hostile neighbors.

The *akritai* were extremely mobile and were posted at fixed places along the frontier. Their stations communicated with each other by optic signals, the men responsible for signalling being re-


Gordium
Ancyra
Larissa
Tavium
Samiana
Basitica Therma
Justinianopolis
Sebastia
Nicopolis
Euphrates
Theodosiopolis
Zimara
Tephaike
Melas
Melitene
(Malatia)
Amida
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50
Miles
L. Tatta
Halys
Caesarea Mazaka
Mt. Argaeus
Soandus
Archelais
Philomelium
Laodicea
Iconium
L. Carallis
Caramalas
ANTI-TAURUS MTS.
Sarus
Arabissus
Germanicea
(Marash)
Samosata
Edessa
Tyana
Loulon
Podandos
Cilician Gates
Derbe
Laranda
Pyramus
Adana
Mopsuestia
Amanican Gates
Issus
Adrasos
Tarsus
TAURUS MTS.
Side
Germanicopolis
Claudiopolis
Calycadnus
Syrian Gates
Orontes
Antioch
Aleppo
Rakka
Euphrates
Seleucia
Celendris
Anemorion
Mediterranean Sea

THE PASSES IN THE SOUTHERN TAURUS MOUNTAINS lieved every two weeks. They were enterprising and bold. Their hazardous and adventurous life, and the affrays with infidels and brigands, are portrayed in the famous epic called *Digenes Akritas*. This was a kind of Byzantine "Western," which inspired not only the younger Byzantine generations, but also obtained an enthusiastic reception in old Russian literature. The hero of this story actually existed. A member of the aristocratic house of Ducas, his name was Basil Pantherios and he was in command (*klisurarch*) of the passes of Taurus. His story reveals, at the same time, the military character of the Byzantine aristocracy from which most of the higher-ranking officers of the army were recruited. According to an anonymous author on the conduct of war, *akritai* were posted not only on the Arab but also along the Bulgarian frontier and their property was exempt from taxation. However, this privilege was rescinded in the thirteenth century by the Emperor Michael Paleologus. The *akritai* thereupon revolted, but were defeated and liquidated as a military class.

Information obtained in this manner by the *akritai* and by Byzantine spies in enemy territory was quickly transmitted by messenger along the imperial post to the capital. This method was, however, inadequate when the frontier between the Arab caliphate and Byzantium was shifted to the province of Cilicia. The frequent invasions by Arab emirs into Byzantine territory forced the Byzantines to reorganize their intelligence service throughout Asia Minor.

In order to obtain information as fast as possible about movements on the frontier, the Byzantines introduced a rapid system of fire signals running from the frontier through Asia Minor to the Pharos along the high terrace overlooking the imperial palace. Watchmen, posted on hills at easy distances, sent the fire signals to other watchers. The service was fast, and the watchers posted on the Pharos both day and night could receive the news from the frontier within the hour.

This fire system was ingeniously perfected during the reign of Theophilus (829–842) by Leo the Mathematician. He constructed two identical clocks which kept exactly the same time. One was placed at the last station of the fire signals near the frontier, and the other near the imperial palace. Twelve incidents likely to occur, and which would have to be communicated through seven relays to headquarters at the imperial palace, were assigned to each of the twelve hours and written on the faces of both clocks. Upon receiving intelligence that the enemy was about to cross the frontier, the commander of the frontier post lit his fire signal when the clock showed the hour of one, and thus the watchers in the palace knew at what time the invasion had begun. When hostilities had commenced, a signal at two o'clock was made, and at three o'clock the signal announcing a battle conflagration was lit.

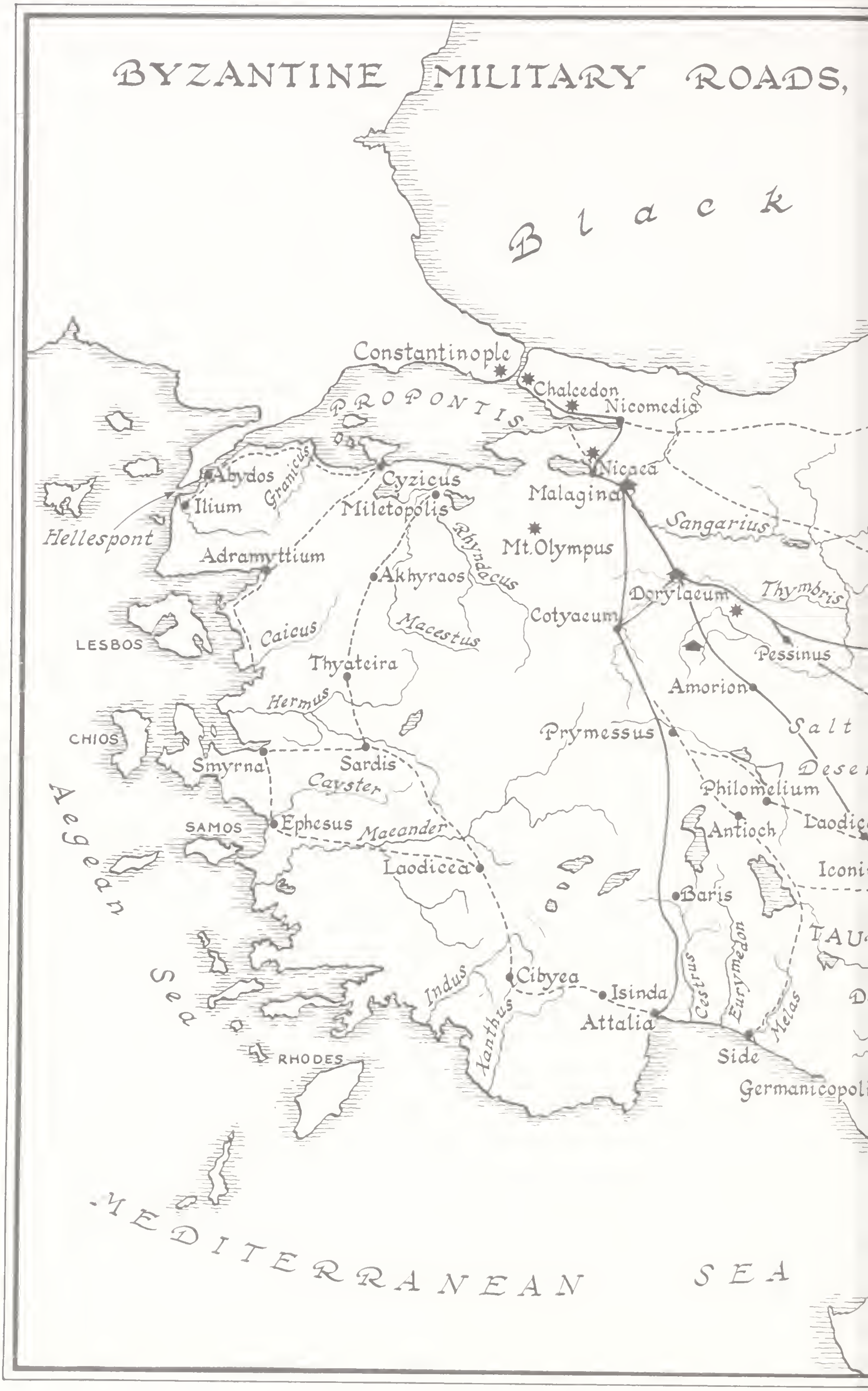
We learn that during the reign of Michael III (842–867) the fire signal began working at a time when the emperor was attending his private hippodrome. The attention of the select onlookers was naturally distracted from the display to the clock, and the bad news it announced. The emperor is said to have stopped the signals. This, of course, is an exaggerated story exploited by his adversaries to discredit Michael III. He seems only to have taken precautions to avoid panic among the people when news of an invasion was signalled by the clock on the palace. The signalling system seems to have gone on working even if the beacons near Constantinople were not lit.

This method of optic intelligence functioned particularly well in the tenth century. It was by this system that Basil II, fighting in Bulgaria against Tsar Samuel, was kept informed of what was happening on the Arab frontier. He learned by the fire signals that his ally, the young Emir of Aleppo, was in danger from the Fatimid Caliph Al-Aziz, who had broken the truce with the empire and was about to conquer Aleppo. The Duke of Antioch tried to bring aid to Aleppo, but was defeated by the Egyptian Arabs.

Basil II did not hesitate, after hearing the news, in coming to a surprising decision. Abandoning the campaign in Bulgaria, he assembled his troops, commanded each soldier to mount his fastest mule and to take another as relief. Using the imperial post, he crossed Asia Minor in midwinter in sixteen days. Joining his army at Antioch, he marched against Aleppo. His unexpected appearance put the Egyptians into a panic. Having conquered two towns in Syria, Basil II returned to Constantinople in the autumn of 995. This extraordinary performance, extolled by Arab historians, shows us not only the rapidity of the information service between the emperor on campaign in Bulgaria, Constantinople, and the Arab frontier, but also the military readiness of the Asiatic provinces, and the good condition of the imperial road from the capital to Syria.

The old Roman system of intelligence service in enemy lands also functioned regularly in the Byzantine Empire, at least until the reign of Justinian. Procopius (*Anecdota*, 30) describes it as follows:

> The situation regarding the intelligence service was this: from time immemorial the government had maintained a large number of agents


BYZANTINE MILITARY ROADS,
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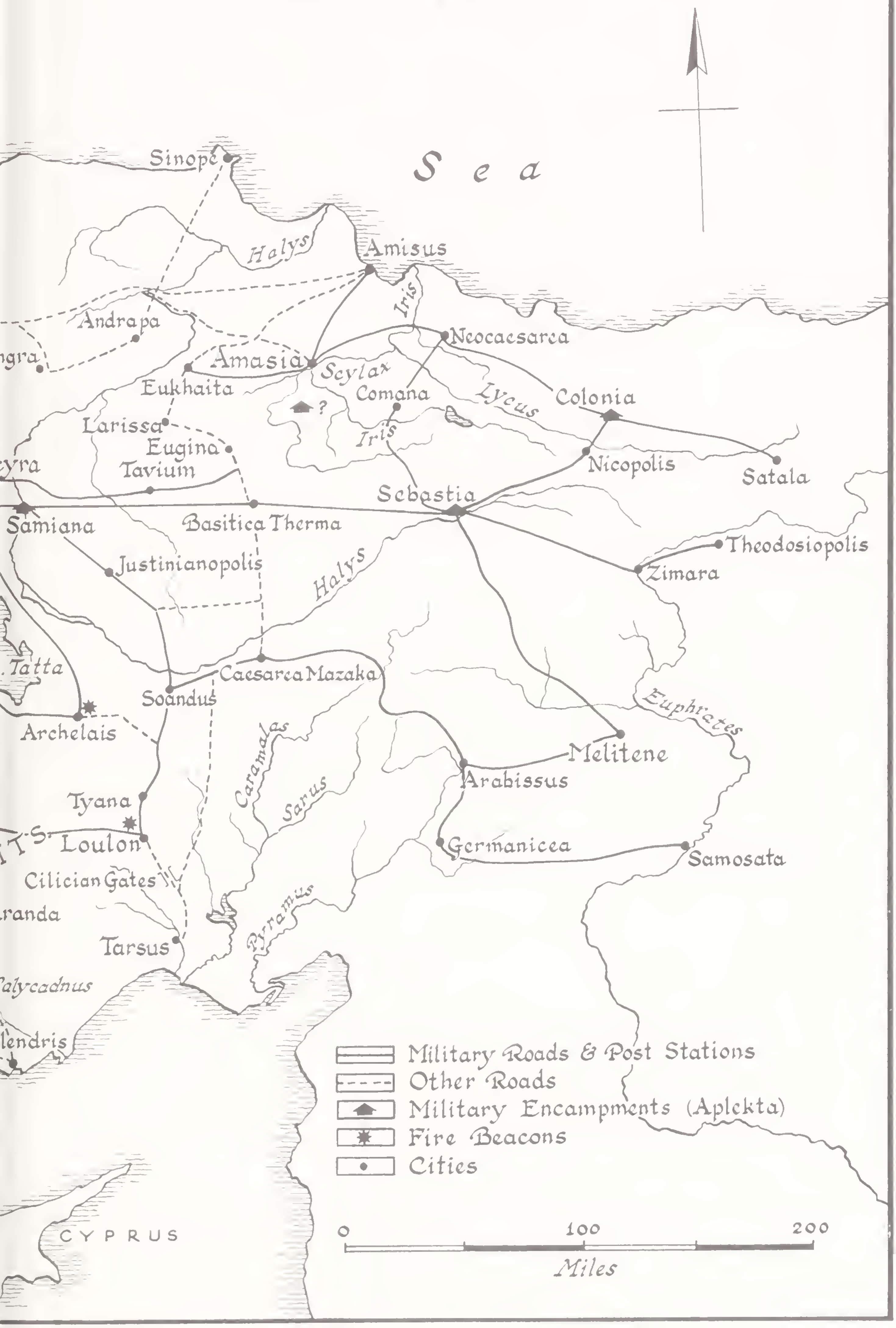
Constantinople
Chalcedon
Nicomedia
PROPONTIS
Abydos
Granicus
Cyzicus
Miletopolis
Ilium
Hellespont
Nicaea
Malagina
Sangarius
Mt. Olympus
Rhyndacus
Adramyttium
Akhyraos
Dorylaeum
Thymbris
Cotyaeum
Macestus
Caicus
LESBOS
Pessinus
Thyateira
Amorion
Hermus
Salt
Prymessus
CHIOS
Smyrna
Sardis
Deser
Cayster
Philomelium
Antioch
Laodic
Aegean
SAMOS
Ephesus
Maeander
Laodicea
Iconi
Baris
TAU
Eurymedon
Cestrus
Sea
Cibyea
Indus
Isinda
Xanthus
Attalia
Melas
RHODES
Side
Germanicopoli
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

ENCAMPMENTS & FIRE BEACONS IN ASIA MINOR


Sinope
Sea
Halys
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Andrapa
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Amasia
Neocaesarea
Scylax
Eukhaita
Comana
Lycus
Colonia
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Larissa
Eugina
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Nicopolis
Satala
yra
Tavium
Sebastia
Samiana
Basitica Therma
Theodosiopolis
Justinianopolis
Halys
Zimara
Tatta
Caesarea Mazaka
Soandus
Archelais
Euphrates
Caramalas
Melitene
Arabissus
Sarus
Tyana
TS.
Loulon
Germanicea
Samosata
Cilician Gates
randa
Pyramus
Tarsus
alycadnus
lendris
CYPRUS
Military Roads & Post Stations
Other Roads
Military Encampments (Aplekta)
Fire Beacons
Cities
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100
200
Miles

> who used to travel about among our enemies. Thus, entering the kingdom of Persia, in the guise of merchants or in some other way, they would make detailed inquiries of all that was afoot, and on their return to this country were thus able to make a full report on all the enemy's secret plans to our government, who, forewarned and put upon their guard, were never taken by surprise. The Persians, too, had long maintained a similar organization. Chosroes, it is said, by putting up the pay of his agents, reaped his reward in the advance intelligence he obtained from our side, for he was always informed of what the Romans were doing. But Justinian would spend nothing; and, indeed, abolished the very name of secret agent from the Roman Empire, the result being, among many other disasters, the loss of Lazica to the enemy, when the Romans had not the remotest idea of where on earth the Persian king and his army were at the time.

Procopius exaggerates when he accuses Justinian of suppressing this kind of intelligence service. We have seen that Justinian did curtail the *cursus publicus* because of financial difficulties, and Procopius, who recorded it, was right to regret this decision, but we have no evidence that Justinian suppressed the intelligence service in enemy lands. When the Arabs over-ran the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire, Syria, the African coast, and Egypt, the Christian population remained there, and it was not difficult to win over some secret agents from among the caliph's Christian subjects. On the other hand, the Byzantines also used the services of traitors with whom arrangements were made, and who were called *kruptoi philoi*, or "secret friends." Moreover, there were agents who were simply planted in enemy territory. There were different means by which sympathies for the Byzantine cause could be won. It was very often achieved by money, sometimes by exploiting religious and other interests or the discontent of higher functionaries with their government.

There were also attempts on the part of the Byzantines to obtain information on Arab intentions through embassies. The Patriarch Nicephorus says in his *History* that the Emperor Anastasius II, learning that the Arabs were preparing an expedition against Byzantium in 714, sent the Patrician David of Sinope, at that time prefect of the city, to the caliph—probably Walid I (705–715) with an offer of peaceful accommodation. The main object of the embassy was, however, to ascertain the intentions of the caliph and details of his military preparations. Learning that the threat was serious, Anastasius II made serious efforts to strengthen the fortification of the city and began to modify his navy to prevent a maritime attack by the Arabs.

A revolution put an end to these preparations and to Anastasius's reign. The attack against Byzantium took place in 717, but was repulsed. With the help of the Greek fire which set the enemy's fleet alight, and of the Bulgarians who attacked the Arabs, the Byzantines were able to defeat the enemy. The ambassador David could also obtain useful information from the "secret friends" in Arab territory. This might well have happened on other similar occasions.

Secret agents worked for Byzantium not only among the Arabs, but also in Bulgaria during the desperate struggle of the khagans against the emperors. Although it appears to have been difficult for the Byzantines to plant their agents in that still barbarian country, they succeeded even in Bulgaria in persuading important persons to work in the interests of the empire.

A tragic story related by the historian Theophanes confirms this. This incident took place in 766 during the reign of the Emperor Constantine V, a valiant defender of the empire against Bulgarian invasions. The Bulgarian Khagan Tzeleric is said to have revealed to the emperor his intention of taking refuge at the imperial court because of the growing difficulties he was having with his boyars, the powerful aristocratic class. He asked the emperor to send him the list of those boyars who were friendly to Byzantium, so that he could discuss and conclude his plans with them. The emperor, believing in the khagan's sincerity, disclosed to him the names of friendly boyars. When the khagan had learned their identity he arrested and executed them, thus destroying all opposition to his anti-Byzantine policy. The emperor was deeply dismayed when he heard of the khagan's treachery.

Constantine V must also have had informers among the Arabs. One of them appears to have been the Patriarch of Antioch, Theodore. The historian Theophanes in his *Chronographia* (p. 663) reports that, in 757, the Arabs deposed Theodore because they suspected that he was sending intelligence reports to the emperor in his letters. Some of his correspondence, seized by the Arabs, must have provoked their suspicion, because he was exiled.

An interesting case of Byzantine espionage, or counter-espionage, is reported by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in his biographical sketch of his grandfather Basil I. This incident is reported in chapter 68 of the *Continuator* of Theophanes (p. 308) and could be dated to the year 880. The emperor says:

> While the emperor's admirals were operating in the West, the southern Arabs took courage . . . and resolved to make a naval expedition with

> their navy into Roman waters and lands. They thought, however, that they should first send explorers to find out the emperor's dispositions. They sent an agent, who wore Roman dress and spoke Greek, to make a full inquiry and to give them a report. But the emperor was vigilant as usual. . . . The spy came from Syria, and when he saw the multitude of ships and the state of preparedness, and had amassed and sifted his information, he reported it back to them who had sent him. Hearing of the unexpected alertness of the imperial navy, they became afraid and decided to cancel their expedition.

It is possible that the spy sent by the Arabs was a double agent, but the manner in which the biographer describes the preparedness of the emperor against a surprise attack would seem to indicate that it was Byzantine counter-espionage that discovered the Arab spy and permitted him to see the imperial navy, near the capital, which always stood by ready for action. The spy, convinced that a surprise by the Arabs was not practicable, was sent back, in order to report what he had seen.

The *Continuator* of Theophanes (p. 383) has preserved another story which gives us some insight into the way Byzantine espionage worked in Arab Syria, and into the kind of communications sometimes used. When in 913 the Emperor Alexander, Leo's brother, died, the Council of Regency for the child Constantine VII was in great danger because of the revolt of Constantine Ducas, a powerful general who had numerous supporters in the capital. He was the son of Andronicus Ducas, the unhappy pretender who had disappeared in Baghdad. The Council of Regency was anxious about the attitude of the Arabs, for with their help, Constantine Ducas's plan against the emperor could succeed.

Fortunately the Byzantines had an agent in Baghdad. He was a tax-collector named Nicholas who, being suspected of embezzlement, had escaped to the Arabs and, in order to win their confidence, became a Muslim. Before escaping he must have made an arrangement with the Byzantine government as to how he would communicate important intelligence to them. Thus he became a "secret friend." While the Council of Regency was deliberating on the kind of support Constantine Ducas might get from the Arabs, Thomas, the *logothete* of the post, received a secret message from Nicholas. It was a piece of cloth dipped in black dye. Thomas handed the message to the chief Arab interpreter, Manuel, who washed the cloth and exposed the writing. It ran: "Do not fear the Red Rooster. His revolt will be ill considered and quickly crushed." The Red Rooster was Constantine Ducas. Such perhaps was the family's emblem. The message relieved the fears of the Council, as it meant that the Arab government was not interested in Constantine and had no intention of supporting him. In reality, the revolt was quickly crushed.

This incident indicates, at the same time, that Nicholas must have been in touch with the Byzantine government even before he sent the secret message. He must have learned from Byzantium what was happening and what kind of information the Council of Regency needed. The episode also demonstrates how cleverly the secret information was communicated. There must have been an agreed code between the Byzantine offices and their spies. Unfortunately we know nothing of Byzantine secret writing, although cryptography was known to the ancients. However, it seems probable that more innocent-looking means were used for secret communications, similar to that used by Nicholas. It may even have been books written in Arabic in which certain letters may have been marked in a particular manner prearranged with the secret agent. Such books would easily escape the strict attention of the Arab customs officials and the frontier guards, and, once in the hands of the *logothete* of the post, the messages could easily be deciphered by the interpreters.

4. Military Intelligence

The Byzantine army continued the task of the Roman legions in defending the state against invading enemies and in trying to discover the military qualities and weak points of the peoples beyond the frontiers, in order to exploit this knowledge in the performance of its duty. Its organization was based on Roman military traditions, but it underwent many changes caused by the new conditions in which Byzantium had to develop.

Constantine the Great established as commanders-in-chief of the mobile field army two Masters of the Army—*magistri militum*—one for the cavalry and one for the infantry. The "crack" regiments were the *scholae palatinae* (troops of the imperial guard). His successors created more Masters, each for a separate district and all under the supreme command of the emperor. The military command in the provinces lay in the hands of a *dux*, under whose orders were the generals responsible for the administration of military affairs. Each had his office bureau, the chief of which was the *princeps* chosen from the *agentes in rebus* by the Master of Offices.

In the sixth century, a distinction was made between the élite corps (*epilekta*) and the "lesser" troops called *hypodeestera*. The élite troops were composed of *Buccellarii*—household troops attached to generals; *Foederati*—recruited first from foreign nations, later from the most warlike contingents of the empire; and the *Optimates*—selected from the best soldiers of other corps. Although these divisions were called, in the new Greek fashion, *Romaioi stratiotai*—Roman soldiers—they corresponded to the Roman *comitatenses* which accompanied the emperors on campaigns, and their orders were still given to them in Latin. Divisions of foreign troops under native leaders were called allies—*symmachoi*.

The many crises which had shaken the very foundations of the empire during the sixth and seventh centuries had resulted in a complete reorganization of its administrative and military institutions. The standing army was stationed in Constantinople and its neighborhood. Its divisions, each commanded by a *Domesticus*, were called *tagmata* (*tagmatikoi*) and included the four mounted formations of *scholarii*, the *excubiti* recruited from the Isaurians, and the *hikanatai*, a corps created probably by Nicephorus I. Another corps, the *arithmus* or *vigla*, formed the guard of the imperial palace and was commanded by a *drungarius*. Probably in the ninth century a new corps was added to the *tagmata* called *hetaireia*, forming the personal guard of the emperor and recruited from foreign elements. Moreover, an infantry regiment called *numeri* was also stationed in the imperial residence. A contingent of troops commanded by a count (*comes*) of the Walls never left Constantinople, even when the emperor went into battle along with his *tagmata*.

Although the imperial palace was well guarded and the private apartments of the emperor were under the surveillance of the *cubicularii*, we read in the life of St. Blasius of Amorium of a curious incident (AS, November, IV, p. 666). The saint was invited by the Emperor Leo VI to visit him. He went to the palace and was introduced into the antechamber of the monarch and left alone. Not knowing where to go and what to do, and seeing only one door, he opened it and asked the man who was sitting there and writing, simply "brother, could you kindly tell me where the emperor is living?" The man asked him to sit down, promising to show him (soon) to the emperor. During the talk which followed, the humble monk recognized that the man whom he had addressed was the emperor himself. Frightened, he threw himself on the floor asking for pardon.

Besides the standing army, provincial armies formed garrisons called *themata* (*themes*) in the newly organized administrative sections of the empire. The armies of the *themata* were commanded by a *strategus*, who was also the chief administrator of his *thema*.

The *thema* was generally divided into two or three *turmai* (divisions), each under a *turmarch*, who was the military commander and administrator of one section of the province. The *turmai* were divided into *moirai* (brigades), commanded by *drungarii* (colonels). The *turmai* were composed of five *banda*, each under a *comes* (count) or *tribunus* (tribune). Every *comes* had five *pentarchies* (companies), each holding forty men, divided into four *dekarchies* (platoons), each with ten men. Some frontier districts called *kleisurai* were commanded by *kleisuriarchs*, independent of the *strategus*. This reorganization of the provinces of the empire started in the seventh century and went on gradually until the tenth century, when even most of the *kleisurai* were raised to the status of *themata*. The *strategus* of the *thema* Anatolikon in Asia Minor held the highest rank and was followed by the *Domesticus* of the *scholarii*. The latter, through the tenth century, held the supreme command of the army, if the emperor himself was not in the field.

Among the staff of the *strategus*, the so-called count of the tent held a special place and was in some way responsible for the security of the *strategus* when the commander was on the march with his troops. He supervised the erection of the commander's tent and, with the *drungarius* (colonel) of the watch, circulated through the camp during the night. He also provided post horses for this officer when he was on imperial business. When the whole army was at war, and being led by the emperor, the counts of the tent of all *themes* had to supervise the erection of the imperial tent and take care of the security of the camp. Sometimes the count of the tent was sent on special missions. St. Theodore of Studios complains in one of his letters that the *strategus* of the Anatolic *thema* had sent his count of the tent on imperial order to interrogate him (the saint) in his prison at Smyrna in 819. The counts of the tent can be regarded as intelligence officers of the *themes*.

From treatises on military tactics attributed to Maurikios, we gain some insight into the organization of military intelligence. Every tactical unit—formerly the Roman legion, but now called *bandon* or *tagma*—counted about 400 men and was divided into companies of 100, each having platoons of 10 and 5 men. Each *tagma* not only had a complete staff of officers and non-commissioned officers but also, besides corpsmen, quartermaster, and baggage master, included scouts who preceded the *tagma* and explored the terrain. When they had spotted the enemy, the scouts relayed their information to the commander—*comes*, called also *tribunus*—tribune—who signalled his orders to the men through his trumpeter. It was a sacred duty of the *strategus*—the commander of an army—to obtain from the scouts, by any available means, all information on the character, resources, water provision, and inhabitants of the provinces through which his army had to pass or which he had to occupy. For this purpose he used a special corps, called *cursores* or *trapezitai*, the members of which were often recruited from the native population of provinces through which the army was marching, or from the frontier posts. This corps acted independently and on its own initiative, preparing ambuscades for advanced enemy details and capturing prisoners who could give more intelligence on the enemy. This corps also guarded the flanks of the army when it was resting in camp.

For a short period there also existed a special corps of military police. It was created in 527 by the Emperor Justinian. Called *viacolutai*—protectors against violence—its members stopped the pillage and brigandage with which the troops often molested the populace. However, the protectors against violence became a worse plague than the brigands; moved by the bitter complaints of the populace, Justinian suppressed the corps of military police as early as 536.

The military forces of the *themes* were especially vigilant in the regions near the borders of the empire. It appears that they arrested everyone unable to produce a written permit to account for his presence near the border. The hagiographers of the tenth century mention four famous cases of such arrests which happened during the reign of Leo VI. St. Elias the Younger (AS, Augustus, III, 495) was arrested and imprisoned with one of his disciples near the city of Butrinto in Epirus by the representatives of the *stratege*. They were suspected of being spies of the Arabs. The sudden death of the officer—regarded as a miraculous event by the population—freed them.

St. Blasius the Younger (*PG*, 109, col. 656) lived as a hermit in the mountainous region in Asia Minor, most likely in the Taurus near the frontier. In the tenth year of Leo's reign, a detachment of imperial guards—the biographer calls them *magistriani*—patrolling the region found him and, fearing that he was an Arab spy, brought him to Constantinople for investigation. The case must have been regarded as very serious, because he was brought into the presence of the *patrice* and *cubicularius*, the eunuch Samonas, already familiar to us from his activities as the emperor's secret agent in the Zautzes conspiracy. The saint seems to have been freed by Samonas, although he did not behave with much respect to the investigator.

The biographer of the Patriarch Euthymius (907–912) reports another incident of this kind concerning Nicetas David the Philosopher. Violently opposing the validity of the fourth marriage of Leo VI and disgusted by the attitude of the patriarch who had abandoned the anti-marriage party, Nicetas left the capital and took refuge in a hermitage near Media, on the Bulgarian frontier, in order to lead a contemplative life. Arrested by the soldiers of the Thracian *thema* on suspicion of spying for the Bulgarians, he was brought to Constantinople and put under threat of very severe punishment. He was saved by the patriarch, who allowed him to become a monk in his monastery.

The famous Luke the Junior, the Thaumaturge, when leaving his home in order to become a monk, was arrested by a group of soldiers in Thessaly who asked him who he was and where he was going. He answered that he was a slave of Christ. The soldiers thought that he was an escaped slave, and after a good thrashing, they threw him in prison. He was freed only when those who knew him testified that he was an innocent man (*PG*, 111, col. 445). In this case, we are probably dealing only with the vigilant activity of the local police. The hagiographer says that the soldiers were looking for escaped slaves. It seems, however, that detachments of soldiers of a *thema* were often commanded to support the local police, which was apparently not as well organized as the army.

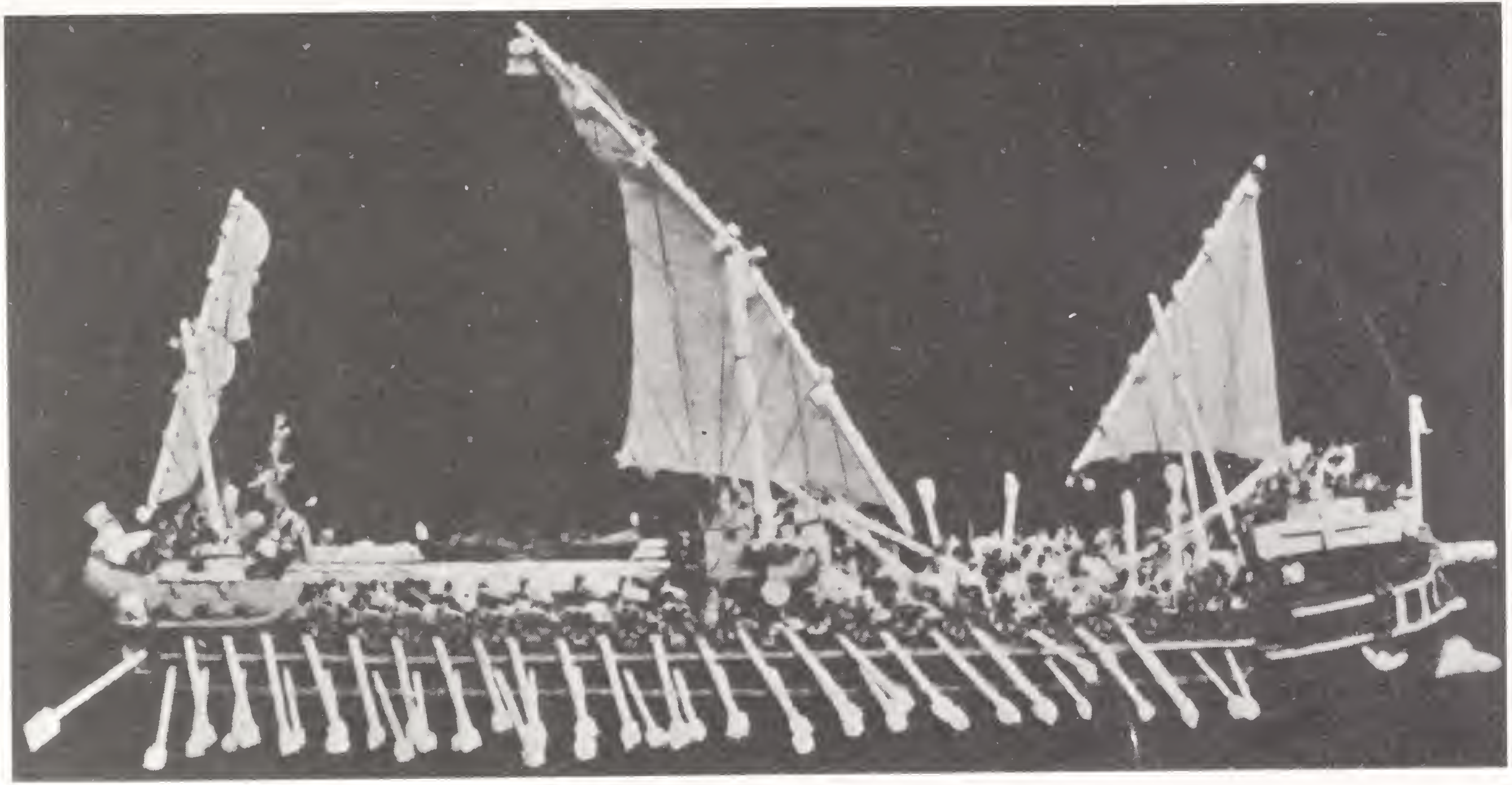
Until the creation of an Arab fleet, the Byzantine navy continued the role of the Roman navy which dominated the whole Mediterranean Sea. But even during Justinian's campaigns to reconquer the western province from the Goths and the Vandals, the Byzantine navy played only a minor role. Although small, it proved its importance in the defense of the empire when Heraclius with his few vessels succeeded in preventing the Persians (626) from crossing the Bosporus and joining the Avars and the Slavs who were about to attack Constantinople from the land side. The Arab fleet was created by Muawiya when he was still governor of Syria. With his Phoenician and Egyptian sailors, he took Cyprus, then Rhodes and Cos. In 655 the newly created Arab fleet met the Byzantine navy at Phoenix (modern Finike) on the Lycian coast and destroyed it. The disaster sealed the fate of Byzantine naval supremacy and forced the Greeks to take better care of their navy. The system of *themes* was also applied to the navy. Several reorganizations followed, but not until the ninth century under the Emperors Michael III and Basil I was the Byzantine maritime power reconstructed and divided into several maritime *themes*, each commanded by a *strategus*. Besides the fleet of the *themes* there was an imperial fleet, centered around the waters of the capital and commanded by the *drungarius* of the fleet. The Byzantine navy reached its zenith in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but even then it played only a secondary role in the defense of the empire, the army remaining paramount. The failure by the government to build a strong maritime power was one of the main causes of the collapse of the empire.

The warships were generally called *dromons*, and were of varying size with two banks of oars, sometimes with sails, and had a complement of from one hundred to three hundred oarsmen and soldiers. Specially constructed warships, a type of cruiser capable of greater speed, were called *pamphyli*. The admiral's flagship was a large *pamphylus* designed for great speed, manned with a handpicked crew and escorted by light *dromons* which reconnoitered the sea. Their commanders had at their disposal smaller vessels which were a kind of dispatch boat with only one bank of oars, called *galaiai* and *moneria*. They were used for small expeditions and for observation; they brought in or sent out information and orders to and from the admiral, and also served as sentinels. Their missions were various.

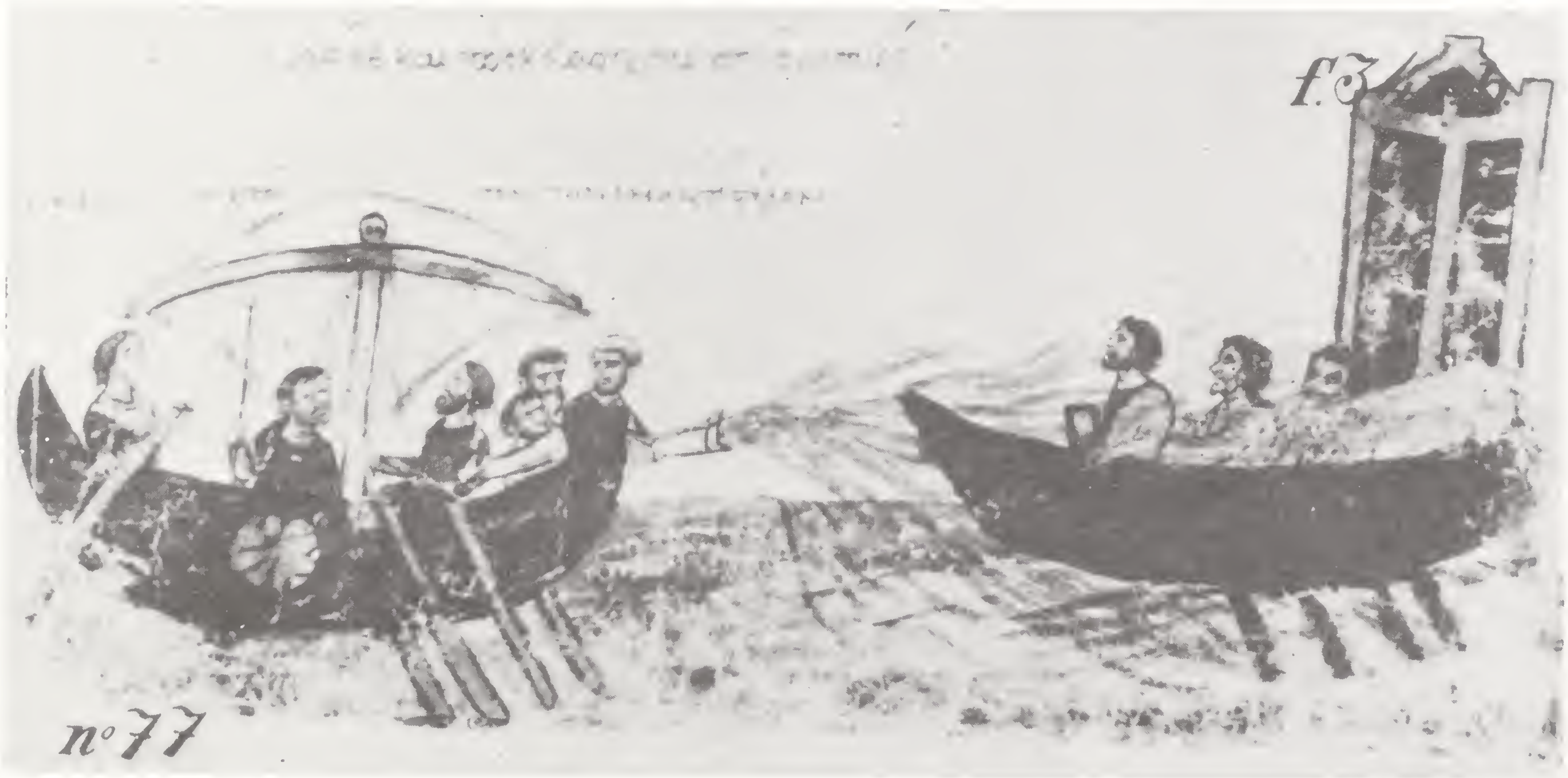
The *dromons* were fitted with ramming spurs, and with catapults and siphons for launching incendiary material composed of sulphur, saltpetre, and naphtha which, on becoming inflamed, destroyed the enemy vessels. The composition of this "Greek fire" was a strongly guarded state secret. The navy was always formed up in combat order and kept patrols, not only at sea but also off the nearest coast. Maritime maneuvering was carried out with great precaution; the admirals were allowed to engage in a set battle only when they had at their disposal more men-of-war than the enemy, or when the fleet was endangered.

The duty of the *strategus* of the maritime *thema* of the Cibyrrheotes and the *catepano* of the Mardaites, in the Taurus region, whose residence was in Attalia, was to keep the coast of Cilicia under surveillance with their *dromons* and to spy on the naval activity of the Arabs lying off the Syrian coast.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, when describing the preparations for the expedition against Crete in 911, reveals that before plans for the expedition were made, the two naval commanders were ordered to put some of their warships into active service and to cruise along the Syrian coast in order to discover the exact plans of the Muslims and their operations in Syria and on the coast (*De ceremoniis*, 44.657). His description of the mobilization of the navy for this pur-



Model of a *dromon*, a warship of the Byzantine Imperial navy (R. H. Dolley, "The Warships of the Later Roman Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 38).



The Byzantine Imperial navy destroys the fleet of the insurgent Thomas with Greek fire (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 34v.b).

pose gives us precious evidence about the organization and equipment of the Byzantine navy in the tenth century (*De ceremoniis*, 45.664–678).

During naval operations, the captains of the ships were expected to observe the *pamphylus* of the admiral, who gave orders by signalling from different sides and heights of the central flagship with banners of various colors, or with fire and smoke. A whole code of signals existed with which the commanders and their crews had to be acquainted. Part Nineteen of the strategic treatise ascribed to the Emperor Leo the Wise gives numerous instructions as to the kinds of signals to be used and how the signalling should be handled. Unfortunately, the need for secrecy prevented the author from explaining the various signals then in use. The author points out that the admiral must first discuss all his plans with the captains of every vessel, give them precise instructions as to how the vessels should be maneuvered, and tell them which signals would be used to indicate the tactical movement to be executed.

The harbors of the major cities of the empire were not protected by warships, as the cities usually had their own police for the protection of their ports. Permanent stations for warships were only located in a few strategically important places. The harbor of Abydos, for instance, had a permanent contingent of warships for the protection of the passage through the Dardanelles to the Sea of Marmara. Warships were posted near the coast of Dyrrachium (modern Durazzo in Albania), in the Adriatic Sea, and in the waters off the islands of Sicily and Sardinia.

Justinian, moreover, established at least three well-chosen principal observation points for the navy. In the Black Sea, he not only fortified the city of Cherson but stationed warships in its harbor which guarded the Crimean Peninsula; thus he was assured of reliable intelligence on activity in the Black Sea. He also placed war vessels in the port of Aila at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba for the surveillance of happenings in the Red Sea.

The most important of the naval intelligence centers established by Justinian was on the small peninsula of Septem (Ceuta) guarding the entrance from the Atlantic Ocean into the Mediterranean Sea. The place was so strongly fortified, according to Procopius (*De aedificiis*, VI, 7), "that it could not be taken by anybody." Justinian ordered his general Belisarius to station in its harbor as many *dromons* as possible (*CJ*, I, XXVII, 2). From this intelligence center *dromons* carrying messengers were sent to the south of Gaul, into Spain, and to the Adriatic Sea to gather political, military, and even economic information important to Constantinople. Justinian exhorted his successors not to weaken this important naval intelligence center.

Some of the Byzantine treatises on military operations summarized the results of military intelligence when describing in detail how the army should fight new nations which appeared in the neighborhood of Byzantium and whose tactics were, so far, unknown. In this respect the most important is the *Strategicon*, which is ascribed to the Emperor Maurice (582–602) during the first period of his reign. Book Eleven of this treatise deserves particular attention because its author deals with some of the new peoples with whom the empire was in conflict. In some cases his work gives almost the only information that we have about peoples who had now for the first time entered into the history of Europe.

He describes first the Persians (ch. 2), revealing their good qualities—industry, assiduity, great love for their country, and readiness to serve it. They fear their rulers, and, when obeying orders, they manifest great patience in executing all unpleasant labors which the defense of their country imposes on them. Their military qualities are also praised. They care for order, avoid recklessness and haste. They bear without complaint heat in a warm climate, and are able to suffer thirst and lack of proper food, but cold and rain sap their strength. The author then gives very precise directions as to how the Byzantine generals should draw up their armies to face the Persians, what kind of stratagems they should use, and how their infantry and cavalry should maneuver in order to defeat the enemy. All these instructions are based on long experience in combat with the Persians.

After describing the strategy of the Persians, the author (ch. 3) gives important information on the Avars. They, mixed with some Turkic tribes, were defeated in 552 by the T'u-chüeh Turks and driven into the steppes of southern Russia. They allied themselves with Justinian in 558. As his confederates, they destroyed the rest of the Huns in the steppes, but after gaining the ascendancy over numerous Slavic tribes and establishing themselves in modern Hungary, they made disastrous incursions into the Balkan provinces of the empire. With their Slav supporters they destroyed Singidunum (Belgrad) and Sirmium about 582, and threatened Thessalonika about 597. About 614 they destroyed Salona, and in 626 they appeared with their Slavs under the walls of Constantinople. Maurice had bitter experiences with them, and his description of this tribe and its strategy is one of the few authentic accounts we have about the Avars. He is well aware of their military skill and praises their discipline and obedience to their khagan. They like to accept presents of money from the emperors, but, he says, they are not to be trusted. They often break their oath of friendship, and prefer to fight their adversaries by fraud and deception. Since they are nomads, they take good care of their horses and fight only on horseback, attacking with arrows while riding against the enemy front. The author then gives advice as to how to employ the infantry and cavalry in battle with them: Because they are astute, cunning, and treacherous, the Byzantine commanders should choose a flat, woodless, and dry terrain for an encounter with such a deceitful enemy. Fortunately, as they are very greedy and unstable, being composed of different tribes, they readily defect and desert their companions when attracted by a profitable reward or remuneration.

There follows (ch. 4) intelligence acquired by friendly and hostile contacts with the "fair-haired"—the Franks in Gaul, Lombards in northern Italy, and with "other similar nations." In spite of the loss of the western provinces—Gaul, northern Italy, and Spain—the Byzantines did not lose interest in them and followed very carefully all events in western Europe as well as in Africa. We have seen that Justinian established the most important center for this kind of intelligence in the harbor of Ceuta.

Maurice himself did not abandon the conception of a single *imperium romanum*, though in his time it was divided and governed by several rulers. He wanted his second son to reside in Rome and reign over Italy and the western islands. He secured for the empire at least parts of Justinian's conquest, regrouping its remnants and creating the exarchate of Ravenna, giving military and civil powers to the exarch about 584. Similar measures were taken in North Africa, which was to be governed by the exarch of Carthage. All this shows that interest in the West was still very much alive in Byzantium.

It is therefore interesting to read how Maurice and his contemporaries evaluated the military qualities of the Westerners, especially of the Franks. He first praises them—for appreciating their freedom and being ready to fight for it. However, they are not as hardy as the barbarians, and they do not endure the hardship of long marches, hunger, or thirst. Therefore, the Byzantine generals, when dealing with them, should protract the campaign and avoid great battles. This will wear them down, and they will grow tired of war. As they are utterly careless about reconnaissance and putting up outposts, they can be easily surprised in their camps and put into disarray.

The Franks regard a retreat under any circumstances as being dishonorable. They will fight whenever they are given the opportunity. Therefore, Byzantine generals must first secure every advantage for themselves and choose the battlefield, if possible on hills, where the enemy's cavalry with its lances and large shields cannot be deployed. They have little unity through discipline and are not divided into companies, but are bound only by kinship or oath. Therefore, as they tend to fall into confusion after delivering their charge, it is advisable to simulate flight, and then turn against them. They are also easily won over by offers of money and other advantages. It is desirable to attack them from the flank and protract negotiations for peace in the expectation that they will be weakened by lack of provisions and become disorganized.

In the fifth chapter the author gives his longest and most informative account, dealing with another new people which had appeared on the frontiers of the empire—the Slavs. This report is the more valuable as it is the first description of the lives and habits of this new people. The author praises first of all their love for freedom and their determination not to accept subjugation to other nations. They are very hardy, surviving hunger, cold, heat, and thirst. He insists especially on their hospitality and their respect for foreigners who cross their country; these they accompany to their destinations, severely punishing anybody who would hurt them. He praises the fidelity of their wives, since the widows prefer death after the departure of their men. They like to dwell in woods, where they hide their property in the ground. They are good swimmers and are able to stay hidden in the water with the help of canes through which they breathe air from the surface. The Byzantine general, however, has a poor opinion of their strategy. As they do not like to be governed by one person and are jealous of each other, they are unable to form a battle array. They prefer to ambush their enemies in woods and narrow places, using different ruses to attract them. Because of that, it is best to attack them during the winter when they cannot hide in woods or swamps. As they have many leaders who are jealous of each other, it is easy to win over one or more of them by promises and presents. However, one must use with caution those Slavs who offer their services as scouts, because one cannot trust them.

There was only one Slavic tribal group which was well organized, the Antes. This group of Slavs, living between the Dniester and the Danube, were governed by a Sarmatian tribe, the Antes, which had succeeded in subordinating several Slavic tribes and organizing them into a kind of political unity. The Byzantines found out that good relations with the Antes could be profitable, and Justinian accepted them as federates of the empire. Unfortunately, this political grouping was destroyed in 602 by the Avars.

The treatise of Maurice was based not only on military science inherited from the Romans—especially the treatise on military matters composed by Arrian—but also, and primarily, on his own and his contemporaries' experience. It was revised many times and appeared again in a prolonged form at the beginning of the tenth century under the name of Emperor Leo VI (886–912). This new edition added new intelligence on the "Turks" (ch. 18), by which name the Magyars and the tribes dwelling north of the Euxine are meant. This is again one of the first accounts we have of the appearance of these tribes.

The "Turks" take the field with innumerable bands of light horsemen, carrying javelin and scimitar, bows and arrows. They like ambushes and stratagems of every sort. They can seldom be attacked by surprise, as they post guards very carefully around their camps. It is recommended that the Byzantine heavy cavalry should ride them down in open field without exchanging arrows with them at a distance. They are averse to attacking a steady formation of Byzantine infantry because the bows of the Byzantine archers carry farther than their own weapons. The infantry can thus shoot down their horses before they can use their own bows. A pitched battle with them by the Byzantine heavy cavalry is therefore desirable, but during the pursuit caution is recommended, because they are able to rally very quickly.

The description of Arab military ability given by Leo's *Tactica* is extensive and gives a vivid picture of warfare in Asia Minor during the ninth and tenth centuries. "Of all barbarous nations," says the author, "they are the best advised and the most prudent in their military operations" (ch. 18). Leo states also that "they have copied the Romans in most of their military practices, both in arms and in strategy."

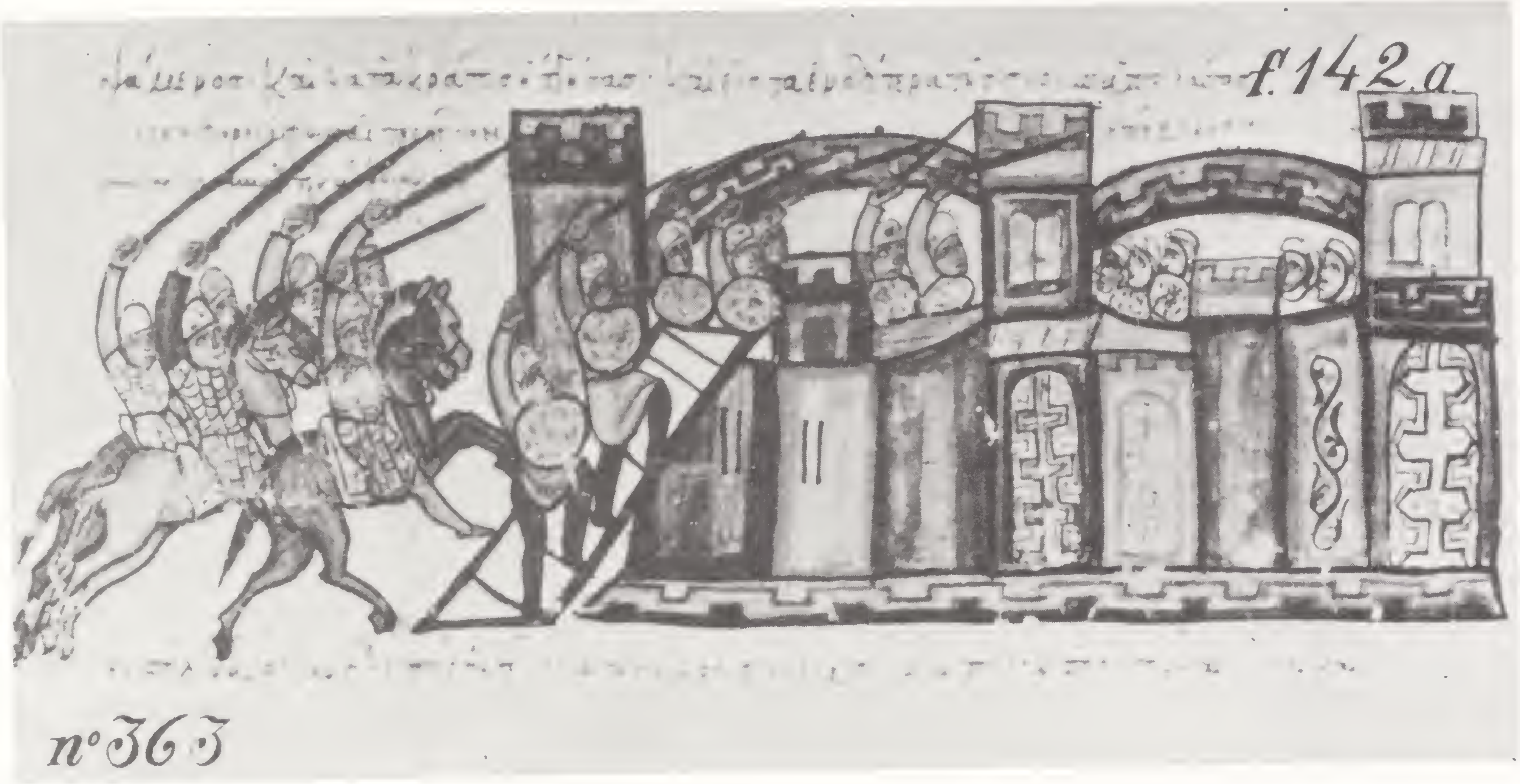
He characterizes the Arab soldiers very pertinently:

> They are not regular troops, but a mixed multitude of volunteers. The rich man serves from pride of race, the poor man from hope of plunder. Many of them go forth because they believe that God delights in war, and has promised victory to them. . . . Thus there is no uniformity in their armies, since experienced warriors and untrained plunderers ride side by side.

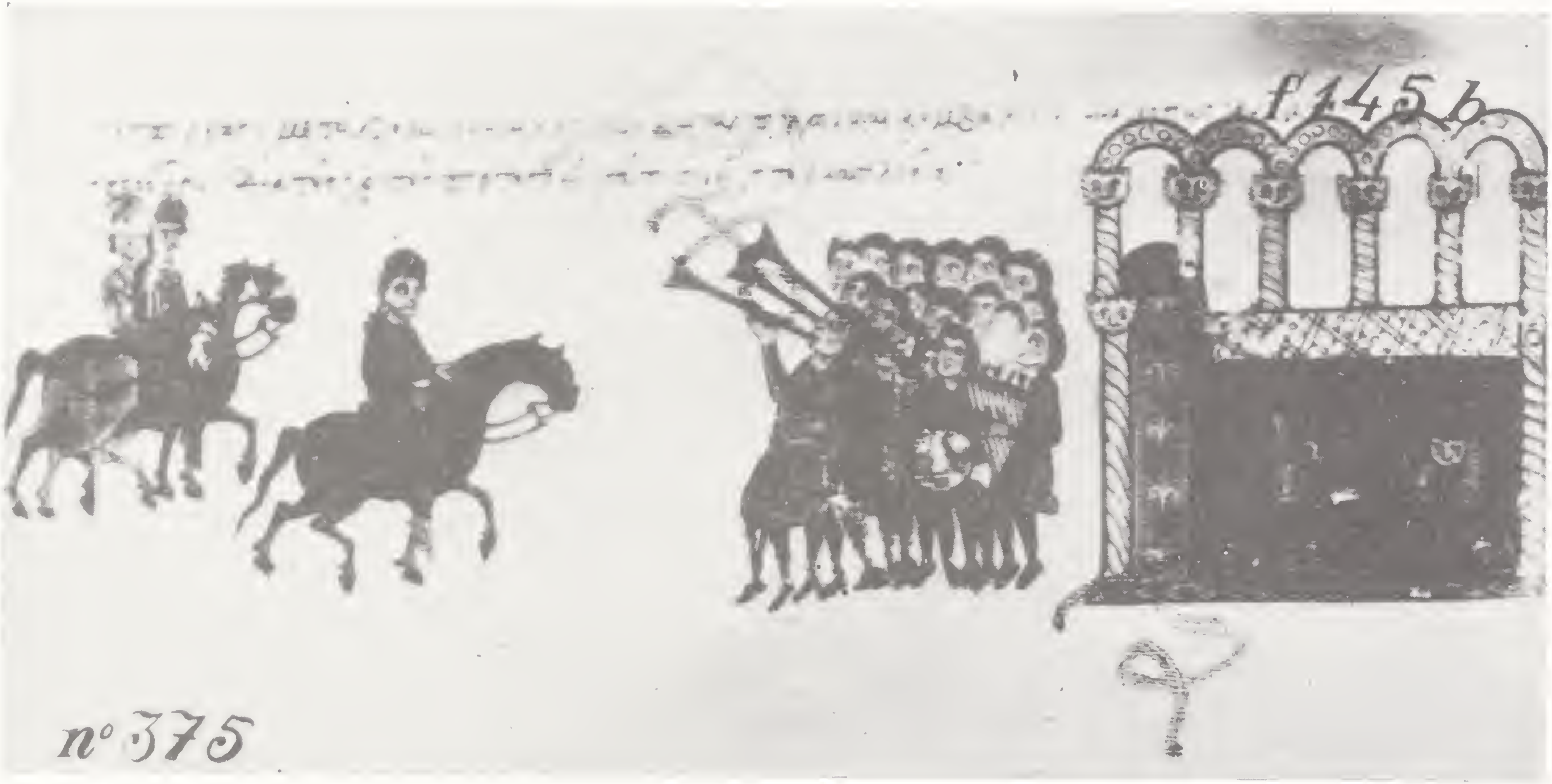
Most of the Arab invasions into the *themes* of Asia Minor were made for plunder, as this region was at that time regarded as the richest in the world. When the *strategus* of the *thema* nearest to the frontier had obtained the intelligence that Saracen horsemen were riding to the passes of Taurus, he should at once assemble every efficient horseman in this *theme* to meet the enemy. Since only heavy cavalry had the chance to ride them down, the infantry should be sent to the passes to occupy them and delay the enemy's retreat, helping the cavalry to destroy the raiders and capture their beasts of burden carrying the plunder. In case of a real invasion with a numerous Arab army, the *strategus* of the invaded *thema* had to limit himself to defensive action, hanging on to the enemy's flanks and preventing plunder by detached parties. In the meantime the *strategus* of every *thema* had to collect his forces, and only then could the heavy cavalry from all *themes*, a force of about 25,000, ride down the light Arab cavalry which was famous for its speed. The Arabs also used camels, and the Byzantine generals are admonished to make their cavalry accustomed to the appearance of those unfamiliar beasts and also to train the horses not to be frightened by noisy acclamations and the sound of the drums of the attacking enemy. The navy should collaborate with the troops in case of an Arab attack, by ravaging the Cilician coast. In addition, vigorous raids into Cilicia and northern Syria by the troops of the Kliesurachs of Taurus would punish the Arabs for their ravaging of Byzantine territory. One can see from Leo's description that the Byzantines had learned during the ninth century how to face the Arab danger. In reality, the Arabs, in spite of almost yearly incursions into Asia Minor, never succeeded in establishing a stable base beyond the passes of the Taurus Mountains.

Leo's *Tactica* repeats what Maurice says on warfare with the Franks, though omitting mention of the Slavs and Bulgars because both were, in his time, already converted to Christianity, and the Bulgars were friendly with the Byzantines. His treatise, as we have already seen, is the only one which devotes a long chapter, the nineteenth, to maritime warfare.

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912–959) extracted from Maurice's *Strategicon* the part describing the war techniques of foreign peoples. From the same century we have a very interesting treatise written by an officer under the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969). It is a very original work because its author concentrates on the organization of successful guerrilla warfare. In this respect it is a unique production of medieval literature. The author also pays special attention to the ways by which intelligence could be obtained by the *akritai* near the frontier and recom-



Conquest of Berrhoia in Syria by Nicephorus Phocas in 963 (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 142a).



Nicephorus Phocas enters Constantinople in triumph in 963, hailed by the populace as he approaches Hagia Sophia (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 145b).

mends the commanders of the advanced posts to allow merchants to enter hostile territory freely because they are best fitted to bring back important intelligence (ch. 7).

He stresses the importance of any kind of intelligence in ascertaining the enemy's position, whether provided by spies or by voluntary informants. "Never turn away freeman or slave," admonishes the author, "by day or night, though you may be sleeping or eating or bathing, if he says that he has news for you."

The last of this series on tactics is the *Strategicon* of Cecaumenos. It is a curious compilation of advice addressed to a *strategus*, instructing him on his behavior and the care of his men (chs. 24–87). The author had probably once been a *strategus*, as he affirms that what he says is based on his own experience. In chapters 218–226, he gives advice on how to treat the *toparchs*, those foreign rulers who, although independent, are under the surveillance or protection of the emperor. Chapters 166–188 deal with a rebellion or usurpation, giving directions for dealing with such eventualities. All these chapters can be regarded as parts of a *strategicon*. New peoples with whom the Byzantines came into contact are mentioned—the Pechenegues (new Turkic tribes in the Russian steppes), and, besides the Bulgars, the Serbs and the Vlachs (Valaques). Interesting narratives are given on the victories or failures of Byzantine armies in cases where their generals had not observed or had neglected the counsels given. This so-called *Strategicon* seems to have been composed between August 1075 and January 1078. Other chapters of this work—a curiosity in Byzantine literature—contain directions given to the author's children on how they should conduct their lives. H.-G. Beck, who prepared a German translation of this work, calls it very fittingly *A Vademecum of a Byzantine Aristocrat*.

5. Diplomatic Intelligence

The kind of intelligence about different peoples which we find in the treatises on strategy and military art had been obtained not only from military experience, but also by diplomatic means.

The Byzantines were in a most difficult position. The boundaries no longer existed in the western provinces and, in order to preserve what they could of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, it was necessary to open diplomatic relations with their neighbors, rivals, and adversaries, and endeavor to learn as much as possible of their military and political characteristics. No wonder they watched so carefully the situation in the steppes between the Caucasus and the

Danube, and attempted to penetrate with their embassies even further beyond the Volga into the interior of Asia. It was from there that the first fatal onrush had come. Diplomatic intelligence was often the sole protection against new surprises, for the military power of the empire was gradually diminishing.

However, this combination of diplomatic and military intelligence saved the empire during the most crucial period of its existence—the sixth and seventh centuries—helping the emperors not only to survive many crises in the following period, but even to renew its past glory in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The first dangerous onslaught came from the Mongolian nomadic tribes of the Huns. From their seats in Central Asia between the Balkash and Aral Seas, and from the Kirghiz Steppe on the north side of Syr Darya, they moved westward, and in 350 defeated the Iranian Alans living between the Caucasus Mountains, the Don, and the Ural. In 369 they migrated with their new subjects into the steppes of southern Russia. After annihilating the Germanic Ostrogoths (375), they also established themselves in Hungary. Their unexpected appearance in the great steppe-belt of southern Russia and Hungary impelled the Germanic tribes to cross the Roman frontiers of the Rhine and Danube, a move which upset the whole situation in central and western Europe.

From the Hungarian plains the Huns, under their dreaded leader Attila, threatened Byzantine territories in the Balkans. This induced the Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) to send a special embassy to Attila in 448 to conclude a peace treaty with him. The ambassador Maximinus was accompanied by the interpreter Vigila and many servants. Fortunately, the secretary of the embassy was the *rhetor* Priscus Panites; thanks to him we are in possession of a detailed description of the route taken by the embassy on its way to the residence of Attila, which lay behind the river Temesh in northeastern Hungary. This description is part of a Gothic history written by Priscus and preserved only in fragments. He relates vividly the journey and the many incidents experienced by the embassy. His description of Attila's residence, of Hunnic customs and court ceremonial, especially of the banquets offered by Attila and his wife Kreka, is very colorful and gives unique information about this people and its leader.

When speaking of the peoples subjugated by the Huns, he mentions that in some villages the inhabitants had offered his companions a meal prepared from millet and a drink made from honey (*Fragmenta*, VIII). He plainly distinguishes this people from the Huns and the Goths. Since it is known from other sources that the primitive Slavs cultivated millet and did prepare a special beverage from honey—Priscus even uses the word *medos* for the Slavic *med*—Slavic archaeologists see in his description proof that the Slavs were present in Hungary as early as the fifth century as they slowly wended their way south where they settled in the seventh century. In 448 they were subjects of the Huns. This conclusion would seem to be confirmed by the report of a contemporary Latin historian, Jordanes (*Getica*, XLIX, 258). He relates that after Attila's sudden death in 453, somewhere in Hungary, his lamenting subjects performed over his body and his tomb funeral ceremonies which ended with a kind of memorial banquet called *strava*. This word appears to be Slavic and signifies the old Slavic custom of holding funeral banquets which ended the burial ceremonies. Thus it sometimes happens that accounts of Byzantine envoys help solve problems which preoccupy modern historians, especially as there are very few authentic reports extant on the new nations emerging in Europe in the early Middle Ages.

The most dangerous opponent of Byzantium in the East was Persia. As early as the third century the Romans had felt the growing power of the Persian Empire, at that time rejuvenated by the Sassanid dynasty. The Sassanids claimed all the territory of the old Persian Empire, and the King of Kings of new Persia became a formidable opponent of the Byzantine heirs to the Roman Caesars. Both empires claimed Armenia, the land newly converted to Christianity, and already Theodosius I had had to partition this country with the Persians (ca. 384–387). The incursion of the Huns had weakened Persia also, but during the reign of Anastasius I (491–518) the Persians pushed into Byzantine territory and attacked four important cities; among them, Amida and Nisibis fell into Persian hands. From 529 to 532 Justinian sent embassies to Chosroes I (531–579) and, finally, in 532, his four noble ambassadors were able to conclude an "eternal peace" which, however, was violated by the Persians in 540 by an invasion of Syria and by the destruction of Antioch. The Byzantine part of Armenia was ravaged as well as Iberia. Lazica, another Byzantine possession on the eastern shores of the Black Sea, was occupied. Justinian, engaged with the reconquest of the western provinces, had to agree to pay more tribute to the Persians. It should be recorded that, according to Menander Protector (p. 360), the third section of the treaty contains an agreement regarding commercial and diplomatic relations between the two countries. The merchants were to make their transactions only in places where customs officers were posted. Diplomatic couriers of both states were assured of free transportation and the use of relays of the Byzantine *cursus publicus* and the Persian state post. At last, in 562, the able ambassador Petrus Patricius concluded a general peace with the Persians, who ceded Lazica back to Byzantium for a higher tribute.

The embassies exchanged between Sassanid Persia and Byzantium, mostly recorded by Procopius in his book on Persian wars, can be regarded as a basis upon which medieval and modern diplomacy was gradually built. Both courts followed a very precise protocol for sending and receiving embassies and respecting the international law in mutual diplomatic relations.

In this respect the description of the Byzantine embassy of 561 written by the historian Menander Protector is particularly important. Petrus had probably made a detailed report on the negotiations with the Persian representative, and Menander's description is based on it. He quotes the contents of the letters exchanged by the two sovereigns and gives precious details on the negotiations; K. Güterbrock (pp. 57 ff.), rightly stresses the importance of this document for the history of international diplomatic relations. Petrus's report contained important intelligence on the situation in Persia at that time and on the character of Chosroes I.

Byzantium and Persia were in dispute over a matter of economic and commercial character, important to both. Silk, the precious product of China, reached the Byzantine market only through Persia since Persia controlled the silk road from China to the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, the sea traffic through the Indian Ocean was controlled by Persian merchants. Here the intermediary between China and India was Tabrone, the modern Ceylon. Persian merchants sailed there from the Persian Gulf and transported Chinese goods, especially silk, to Persia. The only way to obtain this precious material was by making an arrangement with the Persians. The Roman Emperor Diocletian (284–305) had come to an agreement with the Persian King Narses, in which the Persian city of Nisibis became the central market place of silk imported from China, from which center the merchandise was to be exported to the cities of the Roman Empire.

The interest which Constantius II (337–361) manifested in the Christianization of the Arabs in the Persian Gulf was not only inspired by his religious zeal but seems also to have been influenced by economic considerations. He sent Theophilus the Indian to the Himyarite King and, according to the Arian Church historian Philostorgius (II, 6; III, 4), the mission was successful. The fact that Constantius also directed a letter to King Ezana, the newly converted ruler of Ethiopia, seems to indicate that he hoped to divert the maritime monopoly of the Persians with the help of the Ethiopians and Himyarites. Another mission sent by the Emperor Anastasius I (491–518) was more successful. A bishop was ordained and churches were built in Tapliar, Aden, and Najran. The link between this part of Arabia and Ethiopia was again evident in 525 when the Ethiopians defeated the Jewish prince of Najran who persecuted the Christians.

The idea which seems to have inspired Constantius was revived by Justinian, who renewed friendly relations with Ethiopia (Procopius, *Bellum Persicum*, I, 20.193). He hoped to divert, with the help of the Ethiopians, the trade from the Persian route along which silk was then brought to the East, to his newly founded and fortified port of Aila in the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea. The attempt was unsuccessful, and Justinian had to content himself with the renewal of the agreement declaring Nisibis as a center from which silk imported by the Persians could be exported into the Byzantine Empire.

The Byzantines were also trying to reach China by way of their satellites Cherson, Bosporus, Lazica, and the Caucasus district. This explains why the loss of Lazica to the Persians in 540 was so painful, and why Procopius (*Anecdota*, 30) attacked Justinian so bitterly for neglecting to obtain information by secret agents about the movements of the Persian army, since this caused the loss of Lazica. One understands also why Justinian, in 562, preferred in the peace treaty to increase his tribute to the Persians. He wanted Lazica back.

The situation was saved by a masterly move of economic strategy reported by Procopius (*Bellum Gothicum*, VIII, 17.227 [ed. Loeb]; IV, 17.547 [ed. Bonn]). Two Persian monks, who had lived in China for a long time and were acquainted with the art of raising silkworms and the reeling of silk, approached Justinian and revealed to him the Chinese secret. Induced by him, they returned to China and brought back the eggs of the silkworm concealed in a hollow cane. As the Greek climate was favorable to the planting and growth of mulberry trees, the leaves of which are the only nourishment of the silkworm, the caterpillars adapted to the new environment and, in a short time, the Byzantine silk industry began to flourish. It became a state monopoly and provided a very important source of income.

The monopoly of the silk trade imposed by the Persians on their neighbors was also resented by the T'u-chüeh Turks. In 568, Silzibul (Istämi), Khagan of the western part of the Turkic Empire which stretched from Mongolia to Turkestan, sent an embassy to Justinian's successor, Justin II (565–578), offering an alliance against the Persians. The offer was readily accepted, as Byzantium hoped to gain a powerful ally in her struggle with Persia, and also because there was the possibility of circumventing the Persian control of the silk road from China to the Black Sea by directing it through the land of the T'u-chüeh Turks and their Sogdian vassals. A Byzantine embassy led by Zemarchus concluded the alliance in the residence of the khagan. Menander describes in detail the route back to Byzantium taken by Zemarchus and the Turkic envoys accompanying him. His description gives valuable information on the Turkic Empire, the Sogdians, and other subjects of the T'u-chüeh Turks. When the envoys reached the territory of the Alans, their ruler received the Greeks with honor, but the Turks had first to discard their weapons before being received by the prince. Alania had been re-established by the primitive inhabitants who had been forced to accompany the Huns, but they had returned to their homeland after the destruction of the Hunnic power. The Byzantines made use of this friendly country as a very valuable advance post for information about movements in the Caucasus regions. The Alanian prince informed Zemarchus that a strong Persian military detachment was occupying the road along which the embassy intended to travel and advised him to take another route. The envoy sent only a few men along the road guarded by the Persians, and by this ruse the Byzantine and Turkic members of the embassy escaped safely. Menander's report also contained many geographical details on the regions through which the envoys passed, details which were gladly received by the Byzantines as important intelligence on these foreign countries.

For some years embassies were exchanged between the T'u-chüeh Turks and the Byzantines, and a number of them even settled in Constantinople. However, these friendly relations did not last. The break was brought about by the Avars. As we have seen, Justinian had accepted these Mongolian tribes as *foederati*. It was a great mistake. The Avars became not only devastating invaders of the Balkan Byzantine provinces, but were responsible for the breach in the Turkic-Byzantine alliance. Silzibul's son, Turxanthos, to whom the Emperor Tiberius II (578–582) had sent an embassy in 578 led by Valentine, to announce the change on the Byzantine throne and to renew the alliance concluded with Silzibul, received the Byzantines with a haughty reproach for deceiving the T'u-chüeh Turks when they concluded an alliance with the Avars, archenemy of the T'u-chüeh. Again, Menander describes in detail all that happened, recording also the haughty speech of the khagan and the response of

Valentine. The Turkic-Byzantine alliance thus ended and the khagan occupied the Byzantine city of Bosporus in the Crimea. This, however, did not end all diplomatic contact between the T'u-chüeh Turks and Byzantium.

Another Turkic khagan, probably Tardu, Turxanthos's brother, sent an embassy to the Emperor Maurice in 600. He called himself "the great ruler over seven tribes and Master over seven parts of the world." This claim to universal rule by a foreign sovereign was unheard of in Byzantium, but the historian Theophylactus, who quotes this title, made a detailed report of the military success of the khagan, which was boastfully recalled in the letter brought by the embassy as evidence to show that the khagan's claim was based on fact. Theophylactus did so in an *excursus* on the "Scythian" nations in which he gives further details of the history of the Avars and of the Scythian people on the Black River, in Sogdiana and Bactria. He obtained his facts from Turkic and Byzantine ambassadors and from the T'u-chüeh Turks settled in Byzantium. This shows how eager the Byzantines were to obtain from their own or foreign embassies as much information as possible on peoples with whom they might come into contact.

Significant are the details given by Theophylactus on the defeat of the Avars by the T'u-chüeh Turks. Some nomads escaped to north China to the city of Taugast (Loyang); another group moved to the Mukri, also in northern China. Some allied tribes moved with them to the west, towards the Caucasus. Theophylactus says that they called themselves War and Huns, after the names of their two famous ancestral leaders, but that they were named Avars by the Onogurs, Sabirs, and other peoples whose territory they had approached. The refugee tribes had accepted this designation although they were not the true Avars who had been dispersed by the T'u-chüeh Turks.

After examining Theophylactus's *excursus* and comparing his testimony with Chinese, Turkic, Persian, Mongol, and Byzantine sources, H. W. Haussig concludes his study with the following appreciation: "We may have here the oldest document of the khagans which has been preserved which, completed by oral communications of envoys on the victorious deeds of the khagan and combined with other information from the same period, present a source of the utmost importance for the oldest history of the Altaic peoples."

The most important northern outpost of the empire, where information on the nations in the region between the Volga and the Dnieper and those on the Oxus could be gathered, was the city of Cherson in the Crimea which was, with its neighboring regions, under Byzantine supremacy. It was an excellent observation post from which the *strategus* of Cherson and the imperial envoys could follow the movements of the numerous nomadic hordes in this waste region, thus protecting the approaches to the vital provinces of the empire. Moreover, the empire had a faithful ally in the Crimea—the Germanic Goths who had stayed there when their confederates moved westward. They were orthodox Christians and enjoyed a kind of autonomy under Byzantine supremacy. Recent excavations have shown that the Goths entertained commercial relations even with Slavic tribes in the seventh century in the region where Kiev was to be established. From Cherson and the Crimea, Byzantine missionaries could penetrate the different tribes and open diplomatic, political, and economic relations with them. Justinian used their services to convert the Tzanes on the river Phasis in Armenia, and he built them a church. The western Iberians (Georgians) also became Christians, adopting the Greek liturgy. The Abasgues were baptized as well, and the emperor also erected a church for them. Procopius (*De aedificiis*, III.6), when describing the places built by Justinian, mentions the foundation of forts and the building of roads among these peoples in order to protect them and to favor the development of commerce. Byzantine missions extended towards the Caucasus and, according to recent discoveries by Soviet archaeologists, even to the region of the Don. The Christianization of the Iranian Alans went forward strongly during the ninth century and was completed in the tenth. These regions were advance posts for religious and political penetration among the Turkic Khazars who had established themselves on the delta of the Volga and who, from the seventh century on, maintained friendly relations with Byzantium. From all these centers vital intelligence was obtained for the empire. In particular, embassies sent to the Khazars were able to collect information of great value for the government. One of the most notable of these embassies was that sent by Michael III. This embassy became very famous because Constantine-Cyril and his brother Methodius, the future apostles of the Slavs, participated. It was sent in order to strengthen the alliance with the Khazars in the face of a new menace which threatened them both—the Russians, called Rhôs by the Byzantines. In about the year 840, the Rhôs had occupied the Slavic city of Kiev, then under Khazar sovereignty. In 860 a large number of them, with their primitive fleet, appeared under the walls of Constantinople, the suburbs of which had been plundered by the invaders. This embassy is described in detail in a contemporary document—the *Old Slavonic Life of St. Constantine-*

Cyril. We learn from it valuable information about Cherson and the nations in the Crimea. The embassy even encountered a horde of Magyars "who howled like wolves." It is one of the first descriptions of the Magyars who were migrating from the Finnish lands to the Russian steppes between the Dnieper and the Don, from which region they were later expelled by new invaders – the Pechenegues – and forced westward. Also important is the enumeration by Constantine of the different peoples in the Crimea and in the East who were converted to Christianity and who, at that time, were celebrating the liturgy in their native tongues. This illustrated the missionary method of the Eastern Church which, as a matter of course, provided the converted peoples with holy books translated from the Greek into their own languages. Later Constantine-Cyril used these examples when defending himself against the Franks and the Romans, both of whom objected to his own translation of the liturgy and Gospels into Slavonic.

We read in this biography a long discussion which Constantine held with Jewish and Arab scholars at the court of the khagan. From this document we learn that the khagan of the Khazars had already accepted the Jewish faith but had allowed the Christians in his empire to profess their own belief.

Another document from the tenth century, called the *Fragments of a Gothic Toparch*, would give more evidence of how important these regions were in giving access to other peoples with whom the Byzantines could not communicate directly, if it were genuine. These fragments describe the cruelties which some people – probably some of the Khazar hordes – inflicted on the Goths. At the recommendation of some Russians – probably established at Tmutarakan – the *toparch* went in 962, accompanied by some of his Goth chiefs, to "a great ruler on the Dnieper" to ask for help. It could have been Svjatoslav of Kiev (962–972) who promised to take the Goths under his protectorship. The description of the return of this embassy from the Dnieper to the Crimea shows how useful intelligence could be gathered about the situation in the steppes between the Dnieper and the Volga, at this time a route much trodden by the new nomadic peoples. We know almost nothing about the settlement of the Rhôs on the Azov Sea, from where the *toparch* should have received advice to ask for help from a Russian prince on the Dnieper. The authenticity of this document is questionable. Svjatoslav was not interested in the Crimea but rather in the Bulgars on the Volga and on the Danube. There are also other details which make the authenticity of this fragment suspicious.

Intelligence as to the neighboring peoples collected by embassies, missionaries, merchants, and other means, seems to have been assembled and deposited in an office created for the purpose called *scrinium barbarorum*—Office for Barbarian Affairs. Its establishment can be traced to the fifth century. It appears that the functionaries of this office also watched over all foreign residents in the capital and especially took care of foreign envoys during their stay in the city. One of its officers was a curator of the palace provided for foreign envoys. Despite the lack of information on its existence and organization, it apparently functioned at least until the eleventh century.

From the fifth to the eighth century the empire lacked an administrative organ which could be called a foreign ministry. Foreign relations were still in the hands of the Master of Offices, and the Office for Barbarian Affairs seems to have developed from one of his offices. He did not have full control over the *scrinium epistolarum*, an office for the composition and expedition of imperial letters and decrees, nor over the *officium admissionum*, whose officers controlled and supervised the imperial audiences. He had no authority over the Office of Interpreters, which was large and of great importance in the empire's diplomacy.

Only from 740 on was a kind of centralization of some of these services effected in the hands of the *logothete* of the post. He not only took over the direction of the imperial post from the Master of Offices, but also obtained control of the functioning of the Office for Barbarian Affairs. In 992 he acquired the exclusive right to search the Venetian ships, inspecting their cargoes, and of deciding the disputes of their merchants. In this way his surveillance over foreigners and merchants in the capital was considerably enhanced.

From 740 on the *logothete* not only took care of foreign envoys once they had reached the border of the empire, but he was also responsible for the organization of embassies to foreign countries. Although the reception of ambassadors could be arranged only by the Master of Ceremonies, who was a kind of chief of protocol, the *logothete* played an important role in presenting the envoys to the emperor and in the conduct of the audiences. At the same time he had at his disposal the large Office of Interpreters. Thus it happened that in the ninth century the Office of the *logothete* had become the most important ministerial post in the land, so important that he had free access to the emperor each morning for an official audience.

The sending and receiving of embassies was organized in a manner best fitted to obtain the most intelligence from foreigners and yet not reveal to them any weakness that existed in the administration of the empire. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus describes in his *Book of Ceremonies* (Bk. I, chs. 89, 90) the reception in the capital by Justinian of an envoy from the Persian Shah and the manner of his reception. In Book II, chapter 15, he gives us details about the journey of the ambassador to and from Constantinople and of his stay in the capital. He copied this picturesque description from the commentary of the Master of Offices, Peter. In the same chapter he describes the solemn reception of the Arab ambassadors in 946, and that of the Caliph of Cordoba in Spain.

There are other descriptions of receptions of embassies, especially from the tenth century, which give us a clear idea of the main intentions of the Byzantines on such occasions. First, the envoys were treated with the greatest courtesy. Once they had reached the borders, they were transported to Constantinople by the imperial post together with all their companions, often very numerous, were given an imposing residence in the city, and were shown all its beauties and splendors in an effort to impress and dazzle them. They were allowed to admire the height and solidity of the city walls, persuading them that such a city was invincible. They were permitted to visit the churches and to assist at solemn ceremonies. For the solemn audience, the audience chamber was decorated with gold and silver chains and candelabra, sometimes even borrowed from the churches for the occasion, and with beautiful tapestries. In order to impress the foreign visitors with the greatness and magnificence of the emperor, the Byzantines resorted to some rather childish artifices, such as a gilded tree near the throne decorated with gilded birds that chirped; gilded lions crouching at the foot of the throne that beat the ground with their tails and gave a dreadful roar with open mouths and quivering tongues, as is described by Liutprand of Cremona, envoy of King Berengar in 949; and the raising of the throne with the seated emperor high into the air by machinery to astonish the envoys. Precautions were taken to prevent the travellers from going round the city unguarded, or from seeing those things which the government preferred to keep unseen. On their travel to and from Constantinople they were accompanied by a guard of honor, thus preventing them from deviating from the imperial post route. They were provided with numerous servants and interpreters who, however, were instructed to obtain from the companions of the envoys as much information and intelligence as they could. Liutprand, during his second embassy in 962, became too curious and was thus indiscreet, and complained bitterly of the restrictions placed upon his movements. He was snubbed without ceremony on several occasions.

Special attention was given to envoys or visitors from a new country with which the Byzantines intended to strengthen friendly relations. In 957 the Russian Princess Olga visited Constantinople, accompanied by her numerous suite and by the priest Gregory, who had instructed her in the Christian faith in Kiev. Constantine VII, her host, described in detail (*De ceremoniis*, Bk. II, 15) the magnificent receptions at which she took her place beside the emperor, the sumptuous banquets and all the honors with which she was distinguished. The emperor lavished gifts and presents on her and, at her baptism, was godfather. He described her solemn reception at his court in order to make known the manner in which a Byzantine court should receive a Russian prince, but he did not speak of her baptism, for it would be assured that such a visitor in the future would already be a Christian.

What kind of impression such receptions could have made on barbarian envoys is evident from the legendary account given by the author of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* to Vladimir, who is said to have sent envoys to the Catholic Germans, to Muslim Bulgars, to Jewish Khazars, and to Orthodox Greeks, in order to determine which religion was the best. Upon their return from Greece the envoys are said to have declared: "The Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations."

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus knew well how important it was for the empire to be represented by good ambassadors and to treat foreign envoys with magnanimity. He left in his *Book of Ceremonies* several descriptions of the receptions of prominent envoys so as to leave his imperial successors a clear example of the procedure on such occasions; in order to give good example and advice to future Byzantine envoys, he also compiled a *Book on Embassies*, containing excerpts from historical narratives on especially significant embassies sent from the imperial court to foreign peoples, and of embassies sent from them to the Romans and Byzantines.

There is, however, another work by Porphyrogenitus which illustrates more than anything else the importance the Byzantines attached to the collection of intelligence on foreign peoples and how they utilized it in the administration of state affairs. It is the book called *De administrando imperio* (*On the Administration of the Empire*) in which the emperor gives lessons to his son Romanus II on how to deal with foreign peoples and how to make use of the information assembled by his predecessors.

He was, of course, interested above all in the nations with which the empire was dealing during his reign. Therefore the first chapters are devoted to the Turkic Pechenegues dwelling in the steppes of southern Russia, to the Turcs (Magyars), and to the Rhôs of Kiev. He stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with the Pechenegues because they could harass the Magyars whom they had pushed out of the steppes, and because they could prevent the Rhôs from reaching the sea from which they could attack Constantinople. They could also be a danger to the empire if they chose to invade imperial possessions in the Crimea.

Therefore Constantine recommends that every year imperial agents be sent to them with presents in order to conclude and renew treaties of friendship. The envoys could travel to their territory from Cherson or by warship, taking the route north of the Danube delta, on the Dniester or Dnieper.

Imperial agents had thus numerous opportunities of obtaining intelligence on the situation among the Pechenegues. Their history and a detailed description of their country is related in chapter 37. All these facts, especially the full account of their different clans and political organization, could come only from Pechenegue sources. They are based on the reports of the Byzantine envoys, on the records of the Chersonites with whom the Pechenegues entertained lively commercial relations, and on the description of Pechenegue hostages who were detained, according to Constantine, both at Cherson and at Constantinople.

The information about the Turcs (Magyars) contained in chapters 38–40 is derived from the accounts of Byzantine envoys who had visited their capital. The first of these embassies to the Hungarian chiefs was sent in 894. The emperor speaks of one embassy in particular led by the cleric Gabriel, sent most probably after 927, when Byzantium was at peace with Bulgaria. The envoy is said to have asked the Magyars to expel the Pechenegues from the steppes and to settle down in their country where imperial agents and warships could reach them more easily. The Magyars, however, refused to attack the Pechenegues, remembering their disastrous defeat of 889. This story illustrates the intrigues of Byzantine diplomacy. To them an alliance with the Magyars seemed more trustworthy than with the Pechenegues.

Exchange of embassies with the Magyars must have been frequent, and Constantine himself says that the great-grandson of Arpad had visited the capital. All this important intelligence must have been gathered at the imperial court from Hungarian sources. The fact that Constantine gives the Slavic title *voivode* to their first ruler in Lebedia does not necessarily mean that some of his informants were Slavs. The Magyars, at that time, must have called themselves Turcs, because Constantine knows only this designation. Also, Constantine's information, namely that the Magyars after their defeat occupied their new seats at the instigation of the Bulgarian ruler Symeon, must be based on a Hungarian source, although this intervention of Symeon is not mentioned by any other source. Unfortunately, Constantine gives no details as to how the Magyars, together with their allies the Kabaroi (Kabars), who were probably a Turkic tribe, conquered their new country. When describing the new land of the Magyars, he seems to place Great Moravia in the south—a passage in the manuscript which has been a headache to historians and which has been explained in various ways. However, it seems that the text in chapter 13 is corrupt and that one phrase is missing. In the original it seems to read "on the south side is Croatia. There existed once Great Moravia, the country of Sphendoplokos [Svatopluk], which has now been totally devastated by these Turks, and occupied by them."

In any case, this indicates that the Byzantines had discovered no details about the conquest of Great Moravia and had had little contact with that country immediately before its occupation by the Magyars. They were, however, in touch with the greatest of Moravian rulers, Svatopluk. The *Old Slavonic Life of St. Methodius* speaks of the invitation addressed by Emperor Basil I to Methodius, Archbishop of Moravia, to visit him and his native land. This invitation may have been given on the initiative of the Patriarch Photius who had known both Methodius and his deceased brother, Constantine-Cyril. Methodius probably went to Byzantium in 882, and was certainly accompanied by some nobles from Svatopluk's court. The biographer reports that the emperor and the patriarch received Methodius "with great honors and joy" and that the emperor, "having given him many gifts, brought him splendidly on his way unto his see." We gather from this account that in 882 there was an exchange of embassies between Great Moravia and Byzantium, which would explain the interest of the imperial writer in Svatopluk. It is possible that there was a record of these embassies in the archives of the *logothete*, but Porphyrogenitus was uninterested because at the time of his writing Great Moravia no longer existed. This was the last contact the empire had with that country, and only vague information about the reasons for its fall had reached Byzantium through the conquerors.

This is reflected in Constantine's narrative in chapter 41. There he says that Svatopluk exhorted his three sons to live in peace together, showing them three wands which could not be broken when bound together, but when separated could be broken easily. This is, of course, a legendary tale based on Aesop's fable 103, recorded also by Plutarch in his *Sayings of Kings* (174) and attributed to Scilurus, King of the Scythians. Constantine inserted this story into his narrative as a lesson to his own son.

After mentioning the importance for Byzantium of harmonious relations with the Pechenegues because their land separated the Rhôs from the sea, Constantine inserted into his composition a special chapter (9) "On the coming of the Russians in 'monoxyla' from Russia to Constantinople." This insert seems to be out of place in the first section of Constantine's book, but it is, however, the more welcome as Constantine here gives, besides an impressive topographical account of the trade route from Kiev to Constantinople, information which is essential for the reconstruction of the early history of the Kievan state, and on the relations of the Rhôs with the Slavic tribes living between the Dniester, the Dnieper, and as far as the Volga. A great number of commentaries on this chapter have been written by historians of the Kievan state. We are interested here only in recording whence came all this precious intelligence of political, topographical, archaeological, and commercial character.

It is clear that the chapter is not an original work of the imperial writer. He must have found it in the archives of the *logothete* and copied it with very slight additions. The vividness of the description of the route with allusions to places in Byzantium with which the length of the Dnieper rapids are compared, suggests that the author of this report was personally acquainted with the dangerous journey and that he was a Byzantine. Since Igor of Kiev is mentioned as living—he died in 944—we are entitled to think that the author of this description was a member of a Byzantine embassy sent to Igor in 944 to conclude a treaty with the ruler of Kiev.

But by what means was the member of the embassy able to collect all this information? The answer to this question will also show us the method by which Byzantine envoys obtained all the intelligence they needed. First of all, there is one detail that could have been obtained only in Kiev at the court of Igor, namely, that Svjatoslav was ruler of Novgorod. This probably means that the young son of Igor resided in Novgorod as his father's representative. No other historical source mentions this fact; we do know, however, that the Kievan rulers of the tenth century used to appoint their sons as rulers of Novgorod.

It is true that the Byzantines could have obtained information concerning the route across the Dnieper to the Black Sea from Russian merchants living in the capital in the quarter of St. Mammas where they stayed during their commercial transactions. The exactitude with which the names of the cities in this area are given, and, in particular, the name of the Dnieper rapids, seems to indicate that the envoy was accompanied on his journey down the river by a member of the prince's retinue familiar with the manner in which the Kievan merchants prepared and carried out their yearly expeditions to Byzantium. Because he gave the envoy the names of the rapids in the old Swedish and Slavic languages, he must have lived for some time in Kiev where both tongues were used. This shows us, at the same time, that the original Rhôs, although of Swedish extraction, were already under a strong Slavic influence. The son of Igor had been given a Slavic name, that of Svjatoslav. It is to be observed also that in the Greek transliteration of the name Igor, the Scandinavian nasal consonant is retained in the document, thus Ingor, which again reveals that the man who gave this information to the envoys was a Scandinavian.

There is also in this chapter information about the tribute collected by the Rhôs during the winter from their Slavic subjects, which intelligence must have been given to the envoys by a Slavic subject of the Rhôs who accompanied them to Constantinople and who knew a little Greek.

Those Slavs who had occupied Dalmatia and Illyricum deserved a special study by Constantine and he deals with them in chapters 29 to 36, starting with the history of Dalmatia before their arrival. His incomplete and short narrative is interrupted by an insertion giving the Byzantine version of the liberation of Bari, in Italy, from the Arabs. The role of Basil I in the defeat of the Arabs besieging Ragusa and in the Christianization of those Slavs is particularly stressed. He must have possessed detailed information especially on and from Ragusa, since he gives the names of Roman nobles who were the first settlers in Ragusa after the destruction of Epidaurus by the Slavs. He completes the history of the Croats in chapter 31, where he discusses the origin and migration of the Croats. This information could only have been taken from the archives of the Emperor Heraclius, for it was Heraclius who asked the Croats to defeat the Avars in Dalmatia and to settle there in their stead. He also "brought priests from Rome, and made of them an archbishop and a bishop and elders and deacons, and baptized the Croats." Then Constantine's narrative follows the history of the Croats to the death of King Miroslav in 949. This information could have been found easily in the imperial archives, because the Croats were, at least nominally, Byzantine subjects.

The "Story of the Province of Dalmatia" contained in chapter 30 presents a problem. We learn from this narrative details which are omitted in his Croat history. First of all, the Croats came from White Croatia, which should be placed in modern Galicia. White Croatians were still living there and were under the sovereignty of Otto I. From these Croats five brothers and two sisters, whose names are not Slavic but rather Sarmatian, came with their tribes to Dalmatia and, after a prolonged war, defeated the Avars whom they chased from Illyricum and Pannonia as well. The Franks conquered the Croats, but the latter defeated them and became independent. Their Christianization by Rome is also mentioned, as is the division of their country into eleven provinces.

It seems clear that this chapter is a kind of insertion into the account of the Croats and Serbs. One has the impression that the emperor, when intending to write the history of the Croats, had asked for additional information about their settlement in Dalmatia. For some reason he omitted to edit his narrative and simply copied the additional information as he received it, which he must have obtained from the Dalmatian *thema*, probably, however, not from Zara, the seat of the *stratege*, but rather from Spalato. This is suggested by the story of the capture of Salona by the Avars; it is a little different from that related in chapter 29, and thus may be based on local tradition preserved in Spalato. Moreover, this report pays more attention to the central part of the coast of Croatia and its immediate interior nearer to Spalato. A reporter from Zara would not have neglected the territory of northwestern Croatia in his account of the administrative division of Croatia.

The reliability of this account of the ancient history of the Croats has been doubted by modern historians, but more thorough research has shown that, in spite of some confusion, Constantine's reports are correct. The Sarmatian origin of the White Croats is now generally accepted, and the role of Heraclius in the migration of a great part of the Slavicized White Croats to Dalmatia should not be doubted.

The invitation to settle in Dalmatia was sent to the White Croats about the year 626 when Constantinople was besieged by the Avars and Slavs. It seems today also to be established that Heraclius, in accord with Rome, had initiated the Christianization of the new inhabitants of Dalmatia by the establishment of a hierarchy in Spalato.

What Constantine says in chapter 32 on the origins of the Serbs and their migration to the Byzantine territory is again taken from the archives preserved from the reign of Heraclius. Originally the Serbs were also a Sarmatian tribe. They fled, with the Croats, from the Hunnic onslaught to beyond the Carpathian Mountains and settled down in modern Saxony among the Slavic population. They mixed with this population, eventually forming the military and governing class. Constantine calls this country White Serbia. The Serbs were settled definitely by Heraclius in lands south of Belgrad in the country called Raška, from where they extended their supremacy over other Slavic tribes near the sea. These tribes are still differentiated by Constantine and called by their tribal names, but with time they had accepted the name of their master and called themselves Serbs. The first attempt at their Christianization was made by Heraclius, but their conversion to Christianity did not come about until the reign of Basil I. Constantine's description of the early history of the Serbs—an important contribution to the history of the Balkans—must have been taken from a lost Serbian chronicle, the content of which was translated for Constantine by a native, or by an interpreter.

The geographical and historical details given by Constantine about the lands of other Slavic tribes are quite reliable. All this intelligence reached the capital through diplomatic and commercial channels. Especially interesting is the information on the family of the Prince of the Zachlumi, Michael, who was raised to the Byzantine dignity of proconsul and patrician. His family came from the land of the Vislamians and was therefore of Polish origin. Thus we know that one Polish tribe had joined the White Croats on their migration to Byzantine lands and had settled at the foot of the Chlum mountain, and the name of the new immigrants was Zachlumians.

As concerns other former provinces of Byzantium, Constantine was naturally interested first of all in northern Italy, in an area called Lombardy after its Germanic conquerors. In chapter 26 he gives a summary of the history of the Italian kingdom from 869 to 944, showing at the same time that his daughter-in-law Berta, daughter of Hugh of Arles, was descended from Charles the Great. The sources of his narrative must have been the reports of the numerous embassies between Byzantium and the Franks, together with spoken testimonies, especially that of Liutprand, with whom Constantine held a conversation in 949, and perhaps from Berta herself. Constantine's errors in the description of this genealogy should be explained by the inaccuracy of verbal testimony.

His description of the history of Lombardy (ch. 27) is also lacking in accuracy on many points. It is rather a collection of material taken from Lombard, Capuan, and Beneventan sources, often colored by Byzantine political interest, which the emperor intended to use for his chapter on Italy in his projected book, "On Nations." His description of the early history of Venice reflects Venetian native traditions.

Constantine also collected material on Spain and intended to write a geographical and historical section on Saracen Spain, but probably never had a chance to fulfill his plan. This is to be regretted because, between 946 and 952, cultural and political embassies were exchanged between Cordoba and Byzantium, and the reports of the envoys kept in the bureau of the *logothete* probably contained details which would have enriched our knowledge of Saracen Spanish history.

More systematic are chapters 43–46, dealing with the Armenian and Georgian princes and their vassals on the northeast frontier of the empire in Asia. This section was written in 952 with a purely diplomatic purpose—to instruct his son as to the policy to be followed with these nations in the future. It is evident that Constantine was drawing his information from the numerous records of the Byzantine chancery, from the reports of envoys sent to the princes who were regarded as Byzantine allies, or subjects, and from Armenian and Georgian reports. All the details given by him on these countries are trustworthy and constitute an important source for the history of Armenia and Georgia.

It thus seems evident that most of the intelligence on foreign nations given by Constantine VII is based on the diplomatic reports of Byzantine envoys and of ambassadors sent by foreign rulers to the emperors. These important documents were kept in the imperial archives, first in the *scrinium barbarorum* and then with the *logothete* of the post. The emperor's work is unique in many respects. It shows, for example, that the Byzantines kept state archives in which all important documents were collected. His book is also the first attempt at the writing of diplomatic history, thus inaugurating a new genre of historical literature. We must be grateful to him for having preserved the information taken from so many documents in the archives which would otherwise have been lost. However, we must confess that it would have been better if the imperial writer had fulfilled his original plan of writing the book, "On Nations," and had not used the material he had collected solely for the instruction of his son. This change in his first plan explains some of the incoherence and inexactitude of his material. More editing would have eliminated, or, at least, lessened these inadequacies.

CHAPTER III: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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IV

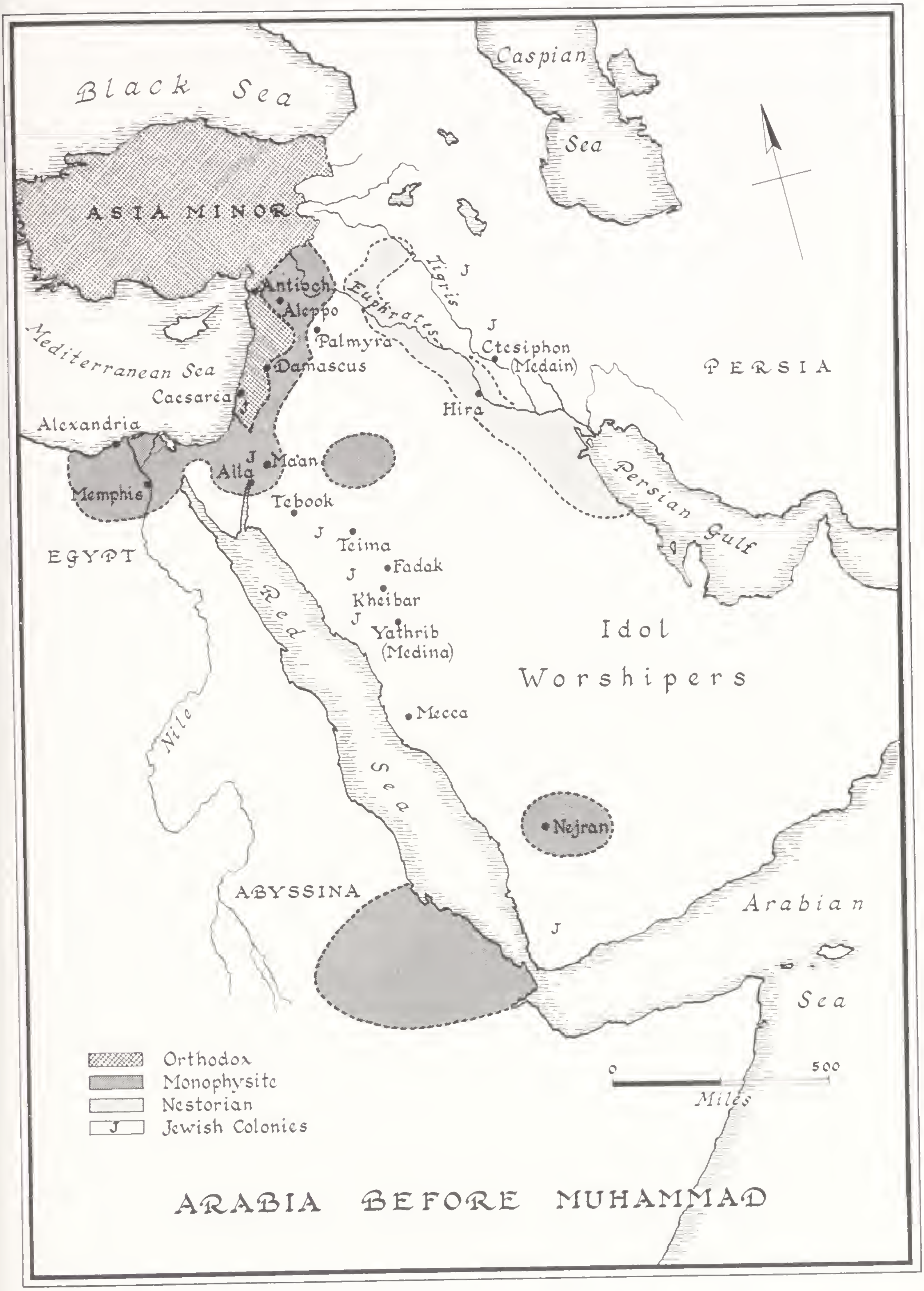
Intelligence in the Arab Muslim Empires

1. The Patriarchal Period and the Omayyad Empire
Rise of Muhammad—The First Caliphs—Persian and Byzantine Traditions in the Administration—Efforts to Replace Byzantium—Reintroduction of Intelligence Service by State Post—Use of Secret Police—Nationalization of the Administration, Further Conquests, and Fall of the Dynasty.

2. The Abbasid Muslim Empire
Equality of Muslim Races, Awakening of National Sentiments, Golden Age of Arabic Literature—Last Attempt to Conquer Byzantium—Reorganization of the Post by Harun Al-Rashid, According to Main Sources—Six Main Postal Roads—Organization of the *Barid* (Post), According to Kudama—Postmasters in the Espionage System—Arabic Police—Post by Carrier Pigeons—Disintegration of the Caliphate—Intelligence Service and Propaganda by the Fatimids—Intelligence Service during the Seljuk's Protectorate.

3. Intelligence in the Mamluk Empire
Baybars Becomes Sultan—Al-Omari's History of Arab Post in His *Al-Tarif*—Al-Makrizi's Description of Baybars's State Post—Postal Roads Described in *Al-Tarif*—Baybars's Post by Carrier Pigeons—Al-Malik-al-Nazir's Reforms—Transport of Snow by State Post—Decadence of the State Post Service and of the Mamluk Empire.

4. Arab Intelligence on Byzantium
Christian Spies in Arabic Service—Byzantine Deserters, Arabic Security Measures on the Frontier—The *Strategus* Manuel—Al-Mas'udi on Exchange of Pris-


Black Sea
Caspian Sea
ASIA MINOR
Antioch
Aleppo
Palmyra
Damascus
Caesarea
Mediterranean Sea
Alexandria
Memphis
Aila
Ma'an
Tebook
EGYPT
Tigris
Euphrates
Ctesiphon (Medain)
Hira
PERSIA
Persian Gulf
Teima
Fadak
Kheibar
Yathrib (Medina)
Mecca
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ARABIA BEFORE MUHAMMAD

oners—Al-Mas'udi's Story on Muawiya's Revenge of Mistreatment of an Arab Prisoner—Arab Prisoners in Constantinople, and Their Information—Embassies—Arabian Geographers on Byzantium.

1. The Patriarchal Period and the Omayyad Empire

The rise of the Arabs and the foundation of a new empire originating from the deserts of Arabia at the beginning of the sixth century is one of the most fascinating phenomena in world history. It was evoked by the prophetic visions of an extraordinary man, Muhammad, who was born in Mecca about 570. He was a true son of Arabia and, moved by the religious backwardness of his compatriots, who were still pagan and were leading a precarious existence amid the sands of their deserts, he devoted himself to profound religious speculation. In the course of his commercial travels on behalf of the rich widow Kadijah whom he had also married, he had occasion to become acquainted with all the varied elements of the religious life of Arabia—the paganism of the Bedouin and of the urban communities—but he was also in touch with Christianity and with Judaism. Some monotheistic aspirations were noticeable even among Arab pagans. The contact with Christian and Jewish teachings profoundly influenced his receptive mind. Rejecting all the pagan conceptions of the Arab tribes, he began to assert that there was only one God, Creator of the universe. Convinced that he was predestined by his Allah to convert his countrymen, he lived through a profound crisis during his retreat on Mount Hira. Here he thought he had visions and heard voices, especially that of the Angel Gabriel, inviting him to reform the worship of Allah according to the principles contained in a heavenly book (*Al Kitab*). He started to preach the repudiation of all native polytheism, exalting only Allah above all. He stressed the moral and social responsibility of men, the last judgment, the existence of hell and punishment of sinners, and of heaven for the souls of those faithful to Allah and his principles. He found his first adherents only among the poorer social classes, and the opposition of the wealthy aristocracy forced him to leave Mecca and to establish himself with his adherents in Medina. This "hegira" of September 622 marks a new era for his teaching and for the Arab world.

Supported by his companions and by emigrants from Mecca, Muhammad revealed considerable diplomatic and political skill, when he succeeded in being accepted even by his opponents as their political leader. The rejection by the Jews and the Christians of his invitation to adhere to his faith contributed to a more positive affirmation of his mission. He declared himself to be the last Prophet, who was instructed by Allah to purify the monotheistic belief of Abraham which had been corrupted first by the Jews and then by the Christians. The Ka'ba, believed to be the altar built by Abraham, was promoted to be the central point of devotion, to which his faithful had to turn when praying to Allah. Pilgrimage to this center was introduced, and the Jewish custom of fasting was replaced by Ramadan. Muhammad was able to strengthen his position in Medina by conventions with the Bedouins and by the persecution and expulsion of the Jews. The war with Mecca, waged with varied military success and astute diplomacy, ended with the acceptance of Muhammad in 630 and was followed by the recognition of his leadership by many tribes. When he died in 632 almost the whole of Arabia was unified under the religious and political leadership of Muhammad.

Nationalist sentiment and the religious zeal of the tribes called for foreign conquest. Rich booty attracted the poor Bedouins, and paradise was promised to those who should fall in the fight for the spread of Islam. The conquest of foreign lands was the task of the first caliphs. Abu Bakr (632–634) initiated the conquests with expeditions against the Persians and the Romans. Omar (634–644) defeated the Persians, subdued Iraq, and founded two new Arab cities, Kufa and Basra, in 635, the same year in which Damascus fell into Arab hands. In 638 Jerusalem was taken. In 640 followed the invasion of Egypt and the capture of Alexandria. A new city was founded called Fustat which later became Cairo. In 641 Persia was again invaded and the flight of the last Sassanid king brought the definitive subjection of Persia to the caliph in 643. During the reign of the third Caliph Othman (644–656), at whose behest the compilation and canonical fixing of the Koran was carried out about 650, the Arabs reached Armenia and Asia Minor in the north and Carthage in Africa. After Othman's assassination Ali became caliph (656–661) but after some attempt at a settlement he was deposed by Muawiya, governor of conquered Syria (658), and founder of the so-called Omayyad dynasty which reigned over Arabia and the conquered lands for ninety years. This marked the beginning of the Arab Muslim Empire with Damascus as its capital.

Arab success was consolidated also by the establishment of an Arab naval force. This was initiated by Muawiya when he was still governor of Syria. In 649 he seized Cyprus with his navy and soon raided Sicily for the first time. In 655 the Arabs won their first great naval victory when they defeated the Byzantine navy near Alexandria. This inaugurated Arab naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean. The previous balance of forces between East and West was thus destroyed. Nevertheless, the theory that this event had disrupted the continuing unity of the ancient world and exercised an almost disastrous effect on the economic and cultural development of medieval western Europe, as propounded by the Belgian historian H. Pirenne, is overstressed. In spite of piratical incursions into Italy in the later period, the Arabs did not succeed in cutting off the Byzantines entirely from Italy. Commercial intercourse with the eastern lands occupied by the Arabs continued, although in a very limited way because of the insecurity of sea travel. It was, however, most unfortunate for the development of medieval Europe, that, at the same period, the "Illyrian bridge" between East and West—the Roman and Byzantine provinces of Illyricum where Latin and Greek elements were culturally intermingled—was destroyed by the invasions of the Avars and the occupation by the Slavs. These two facts, Arab control of a great area of the Mediterranean Sea and the disappearance of the "Illyrian bridge," are responsible for the growing estrangement between East and West which resulted in western Europe having to develop on its own basis during the Middle Ages.

Some explanation is needed for the unbelievably rapid conquest of highly cultured nations in the Eastern provinces of the Roman or Byzantine Empire by a new race that had hardly been touched by this civilization and led a nomadic life in the deserts of Arabia. Persia never recovered from the blows inflicted on its shahs by the Emperor Heraclius. On the other hand, the Persian wars had exhausted the forces of Byzantium. Moreover, the Byzantine provinces were alienated from the empire by heretical movements which the emperors tried in vain to eliminate, reintroducing the orthodox faith by methods not always peaceful and humane. The Egyptian Copts and the Syrians, mostly Monophysites denying two natures to the incarnate Christ, were unmoved by the exhortations to fight the invaders. A similar situation arose in Iraq and Persia, mostly adherent to Nestorianism, denying to Christ the Son a divine nature after his incarnation. Moreover, the Byzantine army was not numerous enough to stop the sudden onslaught. Byzantium must have had almost no intelligence on what was happening in Arabia, although Christian communities still existed in southern Arabia, especially in Yemen. The suppression of the imperial post in

Africa by Justinian contributed to this lack of intelligence of Arab movements.

The Arabs, inspired by their new faith and convinced that it had been revealed to them by Allah through his Prophet Muhammad, were zealous to impose it on other nations. The Bedouins, used to a hard life in the desert and being excellent riders, were eager to obtain rich booty which would transform their simple life, and they became valiant warriors. The rapidity of their strategic movements can be explained also by the fact that the Arabs often used camels in their expeditions.

During the patriarchal period of the first four caliphs the problems of organizing and administering the new state were not yet actual. It was a period of military conquest during which the generals and tribal chiefs played the main role. For practical affairs they relied on the Byzantine or Persian administrative machinery as long as its officials were prepared loyally to carry out their instructions. When the era of conquest was ended, the administration of the new empire with all its problems was in the hands of the new dynasty of the Omayyads. At first they divided the administration of their empire into nine large districts along the lines of the provinces of the former Byzantine and Persian empires. But soon some of these were combined, and this operation resulted in the creation of five vice-royalties. The most important was al-Iraq, which included most of Persia and eastern Arabia with Kufa as its capital; later Khorasan, Transoxiana with Merv and the two Indian provinces of Sind and Punjab were added; the remaining vice-royalties and provinces were: Western and Central Arabia; al-Japhah, the northern part of the land between Tigris and Euphrates, Armenia, Azerbaijan and parts of Eastern Asia Minor; Upper and Lower Egypt; Africa (west of Egypt) with Spain, Sicily, and the adjacent islands.

The viceroys had to appoint their own prefects for their provinces and had full administrative and military powers. The caliphs appointed judges—non-Muslims retained their own canon judiciary—and financial inspectors. A special dignitary was appointed to represent the caliph in the saying of official prayers.

The rulers of the new empire had to face immense problems in organizing its administration, ruling the conquered nations, and reconciling the universalist appeal of their faith with Arab nationalist pride and primitive tribal customs. Omar tried to organize the Arabs into a kind of religio-military commonwealth from which all non-Arabs should be excluded. Taxes were imposed on the non-

Muslim subject population, a "poll" tax and a land tax. Omar's military constitution securing the ascendancy to Arabism was too artificial and his prohibition on Arabs holding property in conquered lands was rescinded by Othman. The five caliphs were forced to adapt their administration to the customs introduced by Romans, Byzantines, and Persians in the conquered lands.

Persian and Byzantine influence manifested itself also in the Arab division of the army. As in Persian and Byzantine times, the battle organization of the army had its center, two wings, vanguard, and rear guard. The only Arab innovation was that in the division of the army the tribal unit system was preserved, each tribe having its own standard. Of course the non-Muslim population was excluded from serving in the army.

The new dynasty ended the patriarchal period of Arab history under the first four caliphs. In order to preserve the unity of the Arab people and its hegemony over its vast empire, it had to introduce a strongly monarchic element into the administration. The Omayyads were, of course, anxious to maintain their family's preeminence in the Arab world and tried also to replace the old Arab principle of succession between brothers by direct hereditary succession.

The way to a monarchic system planned by them was not easy. They had first to combat the traditional Arab particularism, represented especially by the Bedouins who showed their repugnance to any discipline and government organization. Because the ancestor of the dynasty, Abu Sufyan, had for some time refused to join Muhammad, the puritans among the Arabs, called Kharijites, lacked any enthusiasm for a dynasty whose ancestor had participated so little in the original affirmation of their faith. There was also the legitimist party of the Shi'ites, composed of the faithful followers of the unfortunate Ali. Another danger threatened the Omayyads from the side of the Abbasids, who were descendants of the Prophet's uncle, Abbas.

The Omayyads continued to struggle with the problem inherited from the patriarchal period, namely the reconciliation of the national sentiments of the Arab people, which provided the leading cadre of the immense new empire, with the universalist stamp of their religion. Fiscal interests aggravated this dilemma. According to Islamic theory new converts had to be freed from the taxes imposed on non-believers. Some attempts had been made to implement this principle, but Arab racial pride refused to bow to the idea that non-Arab neophytes should be put on the same level as the racial Arabs, and down to the end of the Omayyad dynasty this problem could not be satisfactorily solved.

Fortunately, the dynasty found a firm foothold in the Syrian population, which Muawiya had been ruling for twenty years as governor appointed by Omar. He chose able collaborators, and with the help of one of them, Ziyad, whom he adopted as his brother, the first Omayyad caliph was able to restore order and obedience to the new dynasty. Muawiya showed extraordinary talent as a military organizer. He suppressed the archaic tribal organization in the order of the army as well as many other relics of the ancient primitive period, and created from the military raw material of his Syrians a first-class army—well-ordered, disciplined, and devoted to its Syrian caliph.

Regarding Byzantium as the most dangerous enemy, he first completed the long cordon of fortifications near the Byzantine borders protecting Syria and Mesopotamia. Tarsus with its fortifications had to watch over the passes through the Taurus Mountains which separated the Arab lands from Asia Minor. It would serve also as a military base for Arab incursions into Byzantine territory.

While still insecure in his new position, Muawiya concluded a truce with the Emperor Constans II (641–668), promising yearly tribute to the emperor, as mentioned by Theophanes (ed. de Boor, p. 347). Soon, however, new hostilities started with invasions of Asia Minor by Arab forces. When he felt more secure in his position, Muawiya made plans to conquer Constantinople itself. In 669 his army, led by the crown prince Yazid, reached Chalcedon and took the city of Amorion. The energetic Emperor Constantine IV (668–685), however, forced the Arabs to raise the siege and regained the conquered city. A second attempt to take Constantinople was made between 674 and 678 during the so-called seven years' war, waged mainly between the Arab and Byzantine fleets in the sea of Marmara. Rhodes and Crete were temporarily occupied. The newly discovered Greek fire raised havoc among the Arab fleet, and bands of freebooters from the Taurus Mountains called Mardaites (rebels) threatened Syria and induced the caliph to conclude peace with the Emperor Constantine IV. The Byzantine envoy called Johannes, an experienced statesman, accompanied the Arab envoys to Damascus and concluded a peace which was to last thirty years under very advantageous conditions for the Byzantines. Constantine's victory over the Arabs and their capitulation to a Christian emperor provoked a great sensation among the Christian rulers of western Europe, who sent embassies of congratulation to the victor.

The Mardaites who had contributed to the glorious event were freebooters of uncertain origin, who lived almost independently on the heights of Mount Taurus. They were Christians and supporters of Byzantium, and were called by Theophanes (ed. de Boor, p. 314) "a brass wall of the Empire on the Taurus." Already about 666 their bands pierced the Arab defenses and penetrated into Lebanon, becoming a nucleus around which many fugitives and Christian Maronites grouped themselves. They were called *apelatai* (outlaws) by the Arabs. A new invasion of Syria was made by the Mardaites in 689. The Caliph Abdalmalik (Abdul-Malik) (685–705) had to ask the Emperor Justinian II to withdraw his support from the freebooters. He agreed to pay a thousand dinars weekly to the Mardaites and accepted new conditions laid down by Justinian, who promised to settle the Mardaites on Byzantine territory. The majority of them evacuated Syria, but many stayed in Lebanon, where they strengthened the Maronite community which still exists in northern Lebanon.

The Caliph Sulaiman (715–717) made another daring attempt by sea and by land to capture Constantinople, in a siege lasting from August 716 to September 717. But the Emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) was ready for the onslaught. He barred the way of the Arab fleet into the Golden Horn with the famous iron chain. With the help of the Bulgars he defeated the Arab army, and the Greek fire destroyed a great part of the Arab navy. A sudden tempest completed the disaster. According to Theophanes (ed. de Boor, pp. 395, 399), only a few Arab vessels were able to reach port in Syria. The Arab army had to content itself with yearly invasions through the Taurus passes into Asia Minor, but was unable to make any serious and stable progress on this front.

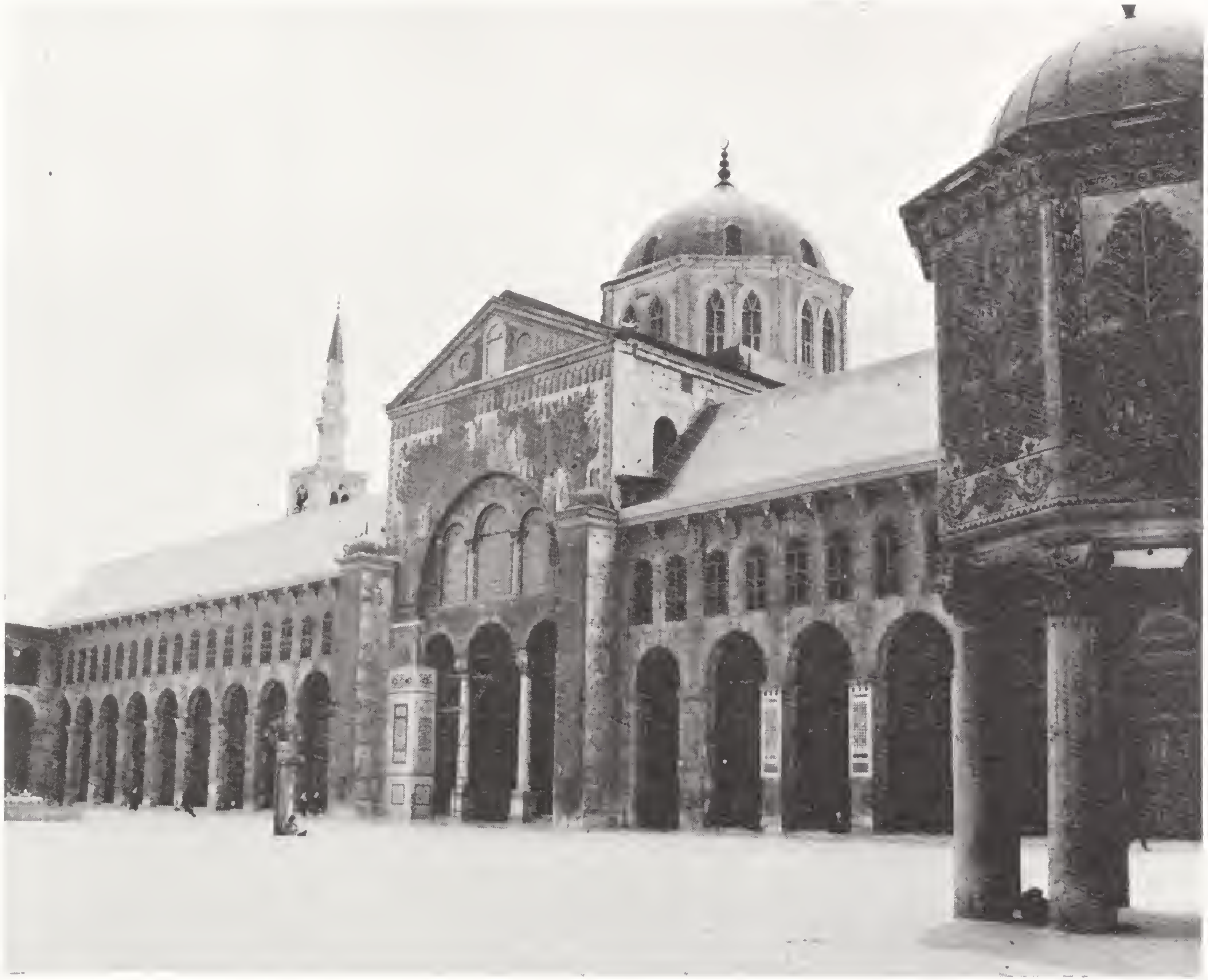
When surveying the policy of the Omayyads we are struck by their attitude towards Byzantium. Of course, for all Muslims, Byzantium (*Rūm*) was the archenemy, an infidel power against whom the holy war had to be waged. The three daring attempts at the conquest of Constantinople itself may be explained by this attitude of the Muslims towards the infidels. However, there seems to have been more to the Omayyad frame of mind concerning Byzantium. The Omayyad caliphs apparently regarded themselves as successors of the *Rūm* and intended to establish themselves in Byzantium as heirs of its emperors. There are some aspects in their policy which point quite clearly to a kind of Byzantinization of their administration.

This can be easily explained. The most loyal supporters of the Omayyads were the Arab tribes already established in central and southern Syria before the Islamic conquest. Many of them had been enrolled as auxiliaries of the Byzantines in their wars with Persia. They had been trained in Greek methods of warfare, and many of their chiefs had held Byzantine titles. This explains also why the Arabs had so quickly mastered Roman and Byzantine military art, a fact which helped the untrained Bedouin tribes in their astonishing conquest. Byzantine officials continued largely to direct the administrative machine in Syria during the first years of the Omayyaḍ dynasty.

This certainly influenced to some degree the administrative policy of the caliphs. Other Byzantine institutions continued to exist in Syria and Mesopotamia. The caliphs appreciated their practical usefulness. We can see Byzantine inspiration in one interesting innovation by Muawiya. In order to regularize the official correspondence of the caliph with the viceroys and other functionaries, Muawiya created a kind of registry which should function as a state chancery. In order to prevent falsification of the caliph's letters this bureau had to make a copy of every official document which was to be sealed before being dispatched. The copies of the original document had to be kept in the chancery. This system was improved by the Caliph Abdalmalik, one of the best statesmen of this dynasty, so that the Omayyads thus developed a state archive in Damascus, an act which recalls Byzantine practice.

An imitation of Byzantine practice can also be seen in the introduction of gold coinage by Abdalmalik. The first Arabic gold coins even bore the caliph's effigy, which was not in accord with the religious tenets of the Muslims. Previously the striking of gold coinage had been the privilege of the emperor. The Omayyads also kept the Byzantine revenue administration, and small adjustments to Byzantine practice are to be seen in Arab and Islamic ceremonial. Byzantine usage, namely defining legal norms by administrative rescripts, was also imitated by the Omayyads.

Another kind of Byzantine imperial legacy during the Omayyad period is to be seen in the erection of imperial religious monuments, especially the reconstruction of the Prophet's Mosque at Medina, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and the Mosque of Damascus. Recently H. A. R. Gibb has shown that the report of some Arab historians that the Caliph Walid I (705–715) had asked and obtained from the Byzantine emperor, probably Anastasius II, mosaic cubes and craftsmen to decorate the mosques of Medina and of Damascus is founded on a solid basis. Commercial intercourse between Byzantium and the Arabs does not seem to have been interrupted by the wars.



The Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, showing decorative mosaics executed by Byzantine artists. Photo courtesy of Cyril Mango.

Far from suppressing what was left of the Roman and Byzantine *cursus publicus*, the Arabs imitated the emperors in taking care of the roads and using them for state affairs, as had been done by the Romans and Byzantines. They even imitated the Roman milestones. The Roman *millia* was transposed into Arabic as *mil* and the Arabic name for the *cursus publicus*—*barid*—is derived from the Latin word *veredus*, meaning horses used for the state post. Muawiya was the first to appreciate the importance of this Byzantine inheritance in lands conquered by the Arabs.

Abdalmalik saw the necessity for the new régime to enjoy a good intelligence service from all parts of the empire. Using the Byzantine and Persian post system, he therefore established a regular postal service to facilitate the prompt delivery of official correspondence and to obtain information on what was happening in the provinces. Following the Byzantine practice, he created numerous relays of horses between Damascus and the capitals of the provinces. The new Arab state post was also able to transport officials from distant provinces with great celerity. In cases of necessity even detachments of the army could be sent to their destination by the post organization. The Caliph Walid found the post very helpful in connection with his building operations. Omar II (717–720) is said to have erected special relays (*khans*) on the Khorasan road for the post.

We have little information on the organization and functioning of the Arab post system during the Omayyad period. It seems, however, that it was based on regulations which had been introduced by the Romans and Byzantines. The *barid* was intended to serve only state interests, and special permission for its use had to be given by the governors of the provinces. This permission had to be given in writing, a fact which recalls the Roman *tessera* and *evectio*. This can be concluded from some Arab papyri preserved in the John Rylands Library in Manchester and published by A. S. Margoliouth. The papyri date from A.D. 751–753. In these documents the postmaster of Ushman in Upper Egypt, who is given the title of *sahib barid*, is asked by his governor to let certain government messengers—one of whom was in the service of the governor himself—use the service of the *barid*.

Military operations were also aided by the *barid*. According to J. Wellhausen (p. 233), quoting Tabari's *Chronicle*, Haijaj, viceroy in Iraq, sent an army in 669–670 against the T'u-chüeh king of Kabul (modern Afghanistan), who had refused to pay the tribute. As his campaign progressed, Abd-al Rahman, the commander of the army, gradually established a regular postal service with relays and *barid* horses in order to ensure his lines of communication.

The difficulties which the first Omayyad caliph had to face, especially from the Shi'ites, had shown Muawiya how important it was to have good intelligence about any possible anti-dynastic movement. This necessity was especially understood by his adopted brother Ziyad. He was first appointed ruler of Basra, a center of Shi'ism. When elevated to the government of Kufa he became the absolute ruler of the whole eastern part of the empire, including Arabia and Persia. It was the most important but also most turbulent part of the empire. In order to exterminate all opposition to the caliph he organized a widespread intelligence and spying service. He chose 4,000 reliable men to act as his bodyguard, but also to serve as spies and as a secret police in his territory. The Shi'ite opposition was stubborn, and it was only thanks to this merciless secret police and spying system that the new dynastic régime could survive against all the intrigues and conspiracies.

These military attempts against Constantinople and the administrative adaptation of Byzantine usages and traditions both demonstrate that the first Omayyads adopted the pretext of being heirs of the emperors and were determined to replace them. From their capital they hoped to rule their inheritance of the Roman and Byzantine Empires.

This, of course, did not mean that they were neglecting their duties in promoting Arab national interests. This is illustrated by the innovations made by Abdalmalik.

The reign of Abdalmalik is characterized by a profound Arabicization of the state. He changed the language of the public registers from Greek to Arabic in Damascus, and from Pahlavi to Arabic in al-Iraq and the eastern provinces. This naturally caused a change in the personnel charged with the registers. The first caliphs kept in the conquered Greek lands those officials who wrote only in Greek, and in Iraq and Persia those who wrote only in Persian.

Under the reign of Muawiya some Christians occupied important functions in the administration and were received at his court. The most prominent among them was Sargun ibn Mansur, who held the office of finance administrator to the caliph. His son was a boyhood friend of the future Caliph Yazid and worked in the bureau of his father. The new course of affairs introduced by Abdalmalik put an end to their careers. Mansur's son entered a monastery in Jerusalem and became one of the most famous theologians of the Eastern Church—St. John of Damascus.

One can suppose that some Christian or Persian employees who had learned Arabic continued to serve under the new régime, the more so as the old system was not changed. As there were not many Arabs familiar with administrative work, the change went on very slowly, and was continued under Abdalmalik's son and successor Walid I (705–715).

Even when their first preoccupation was to conquer the residence of the emperors, the Omayyads did not neglect the extension of their power in the East. The conquest of the territory beyond the Oxus, started by Muawiya, was pushed as far as the river Jaxartes; the cities of Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarkand became centers of Muslim propaganda. The supremacy of Islam in Central Asia was thus established. In 710 an Arab army crossed the territory of modern Baluchistan and conquered Sind, the lower valley of the Indus with its seacoast. This was the beginning of the Islamization of the Indian border provinces, where the Muslim state of Pakistan was to be established in modern times.

Even more important was the reconquest and pacification of northern Africa by the governor Hassan, a conquest which was extended by the governor Musa as far as Tangier. The Hamitic Berbers, although in great part Christianized, were gradually Islamized and also Arabicized. Musa and Tariq, a Berber freedman, crossed the straits in 711 and began the conquest of Visigothic Spain. Gibraltar—Jebel Tariq, the Mount of Tariq—still recalls this deed. The conquest of the Iberian peninsula was the most sensational campaign of the Arabs. They even crossed the Pyrenees, but after the capture of some towns in southern Gaul they were stopped by Charles Martel in the famous battle between Tours and Poitiers in 732.

This happened during the reign of the last able and venerated caliph of the Omayyad dynasty, Hisham (724–743). He is rightly regarded by Arab historians as a true statesman of the Omayyad dynasty, on a level with Muawiya and Abdalmalik. It was also under Hisham that the change of Arab policy from the Byzantine tradition towards the Eastern was most clearly marked. Some of the other caliphs of the dynasty were unworthy of their high position. Following the example of Yazid II (720–724), they passed their time in hunting, drinking wine, indulging in luxury due to increased wealth, and enlarging their harems; they were more absorbed in music and poetry than in religious and state affairs. As there was seldom a strong hand on the throne, the typical weaknesses of the Arab nature—inclination to individualism, tribal spirit, and feuds—asserted themselves increasingly. The most dangerous feud existed between the

North Arabian tribes which had emigrated into Iraq before Islam and the South Arabian tribes of Syria.

These tribes were never fully amalgamated and their jealous aspirations and ambitions poisoned Arab political life, precipitating the downfall of the dynasty. The situation was complicated also by the lack of any fixed rule of hereditary succession. In this way the initiative of Muawiya, who had tried to introduce the hereditary system in the succession to the throne, failed to break the antiquated tribal principle of seniority in succession. Of the fourteen caliphs of the dynasty only four had their sons as immediate successors.

The activity of the Shi'ites, always hostile to the "usurpers," became very lively in Iraq and the majority of the population joined them, mostly in opposition to Syrian rule. National feeling formed the background to this development, the Persians regretting the loss of their national independence. Under the guise of Shi'ism, Iranianism was coming back to life. This development was accelerated by the fact that the Omayyads had not succeeded in granting to the non-Arab Muslims, who were mostly representative of a higher and more ancient culture than that of their conquerors, exemption from the capitation tax paid by non-Muslims.

Of course, this dissatisfaction spread from Iraq to Persia and to the northeastern province of Khorasan, while the extravagance of the worldly-minded caliphs provoked strong condemnation from the purists. They charged them with neglect of Koranic and traditional laws and were ready to give their religious sanction to any political opposition.

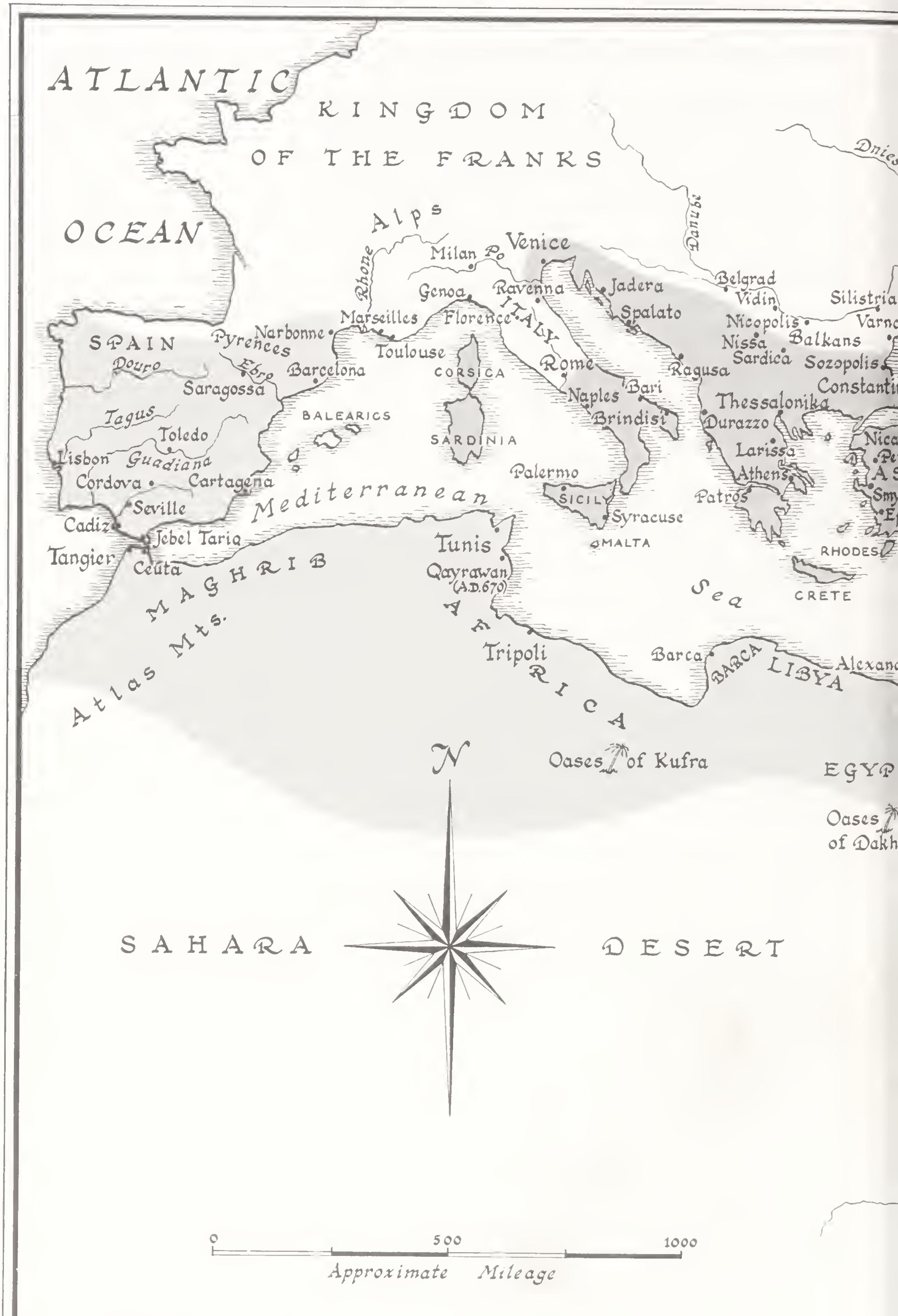
All these manifestations of dissatisfaction prepared the downfall of the dynasty. Its end was sealed when the Shi'ites of Iraq, Persia, and Khorasan made an alliance with the descendant of Muhammad's uncle, also called Abbas, who became the head of the coalition. The well-prepared revolt started in 747 when the revolutionaries unfurled the black banner, originally the standard of Muhammad and now that of the Abbasids. The dissatisfaction had heightened during the reign of the dissolute successors of Hisham, and the last caliph of the Omayyad dynasty, Marwan II, was unable to stop the revolution. Abbas was proclaimed anti-caliph in 749 in Kufa. The last desperate stand of Marwan was crushed, and even Damascus capitulated in 750. The fugitive caliph was taken prisoner and killed in Egypt. The new caliph, founder of the Abbasid dynasty, disposed quickly and brutally of any danger of counter-revolution by exterminating every member of the defeated dynasty and all its branches. Only one youthful member, Abd ar-Rahman I, made a dramatic escape to Spain, where he succeeded in establishing a new Omayyad dynasty which wrote some brilliant pages in Spanish Muslim history.

2. The Abbasid Muslim Empire

The Caliph Abbas, or Abu-l-Abbas al-Saffah (750–754), opened a new period in Arab history as the founder of a dynasty which reigned, even if it did not always rule, from 750 to 1258. The installation of a new dynasty was thought to have realized the true conception of the caliphate as a theocratic regime, replacing the Omayyad idea of a purely secular state. Such a characterization of the rule of the Omayyad and Abbasid dynasties was only partly justified. It is true that the religious character of the caliphate was emphasized by the new ruler who on ceremonial occasions began to don the mantle of Muhammad, and surrounded himself with men versed in Koranic and canon law. In reality, however, the Abbasids were as worldly minded as their predecessors, in spite of their religious veneer.

There was, however, one fundamental difference between the empires ruled by the two dynasties. The Omayyad Empire was Arab. Its rulers failed to put forward the universal character of their religion, a fact which was to prove fatal to them. The Abbasid Empire was a Muslim Empire in which all who had accepted the Prophet's faith were equal in rank, without distinction of race. The Arabs were no longer the dominant race, but only one of the many races of which the empire was composed. The center of the new political power was also changed. It was not in Syria, but in Iraq and Persia, where the revolution of the Abbasids had started. Not Damascus was its capital, but a new city, Baghdad. This city, built by Al-Mansur (754–775), brother and successor of Abbas, was near the old Sassanid capital, Ctesiphon, on the Tigris. Al-Mansur was also the real founder of the Abbasid Empire. He ruled as an absolute monarch and never hesitated to eliminate any kind of disloyalty to the new dynasty. The Shi'ites realized too late that the new caliphs were as deaf to their claims and as unscrupulous as their predecessors. New heretical movements appeared, brought about by the combination of extreme Shi'ite ideas with the ancient religious and social doctrines of old Iran. Al-Mansur himself massacred without mercy the members of one Iranian sect which claimed that he should be adored as a god.

The equality of all races of the Muslim Empire was bound to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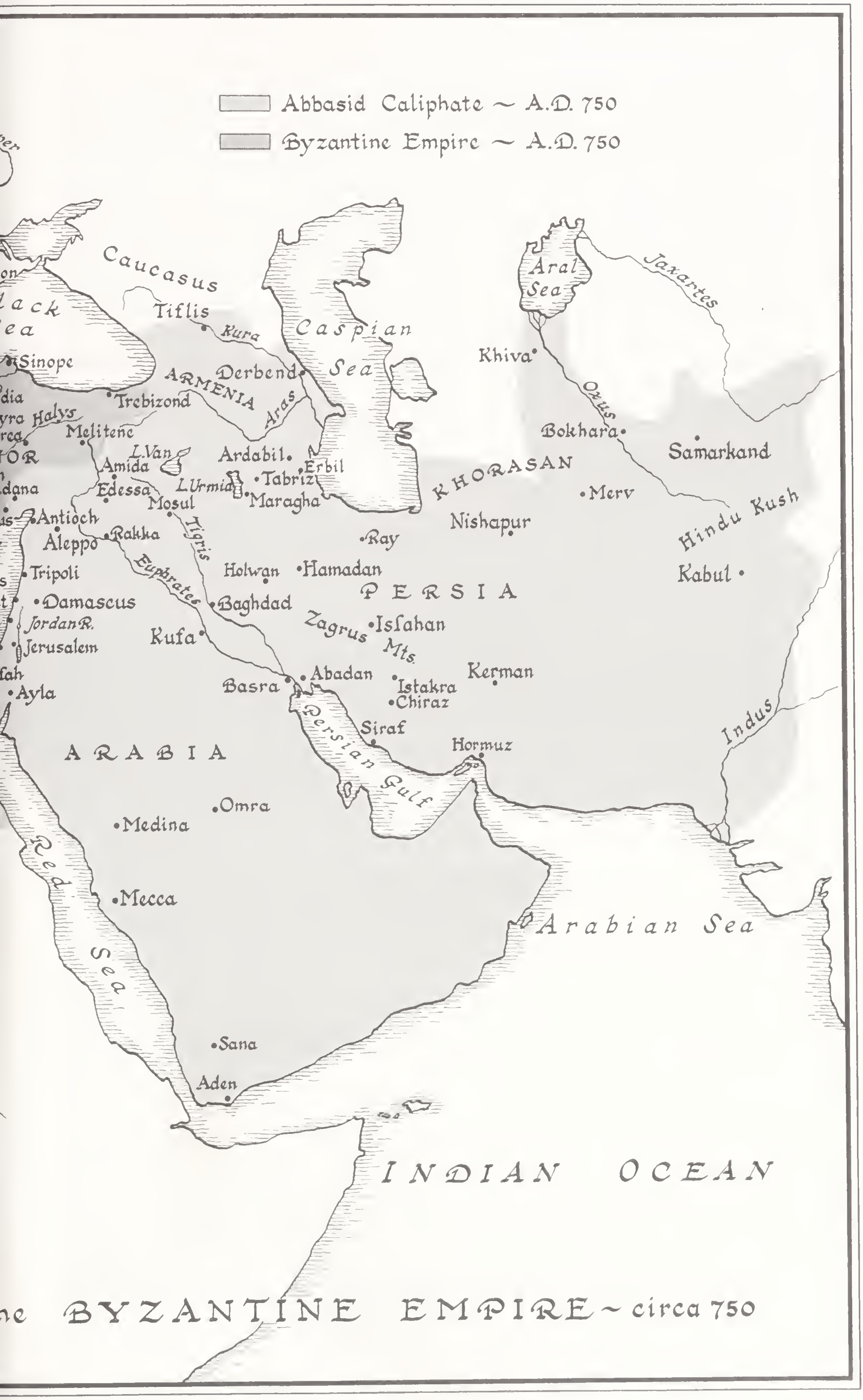
THE ABBASID CALIPHATE and

Dorothy deFontaine

▭ Abbasid Caliphate ~ A.D. 750
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INDIAN OCEAN
ne BYZANTINE EMPIRE ~ circa 750

produce some effects which were dangerous to the orthodox Muslim faith. Old Iranian religious ideas were not completely forgotten, and many thinkers and politicians of Iranian stock were tempted to combine these with Muslim teaching, endowing them sometimes with social and political significance. Al-Mansur's son Al-Mahdi (775–785) felt obliged to create a kind of inquisitorial organ in order to suppress heterodox movements and dualistic ideas of Iranian origin which were fermenting the intellectual classes of Iraq. Many intellectuals became victims of this persecution.

Soon another danger threatened to disrupt the unity of the immense empire. The principle of the equality of all races awakened national or tribal motives, and memories of national or tribal independence. This often provoked revolts against the monarchic caliphate. Harun Al-Rashid (786–809), one of the most celebrated caliphs, initiated a policy which was to lead to the dismemberment of Muslim unity, when in 799 he granted to the Aghlabids of Tunisia investiture as sovereign tributaries and vassals, making them in fact almost independent of Baghdad.

On the other hand the de-arabization of the empire opened the literary treasures and scientific and medical achievements of the Hellenistic and Syriac age of the newly Muslimized nations to the Arab world. An Arab literary and scientific renaissance resulted from the appropriation of these treasures by Arab intellectuals, who propagated these discoveries in their translations from Greek and Syriac. In one respect the Arabs could record a great national victory. Almost all the Muslimized nations of the Abbasid Empire adopted the Arabic language and expressed their ideas and the achievements of their new culture in the language of their conquerors. The fusion of the old Arabic traditions with the talent of the conquered is well illustrated by the fact that Harun owed the greatness and fame of his reign to the assistance of his vizir Yahya al-Barmaki, who was from a family of purely Persian origin. The fame of Harun Al-Rashid penetrated to China, the far east, and into the west, whose greatest ruler Charlemagne entertained diplomatic relations with the great caliph.

A deep dynastic crisis arose after Harun's death, owing to a fratricidal war between the designated heir Caliph Al-Amin (809–813) and his brother Al-Mamun. Although this led to the destruction of a part of Baghdad besieged by Al-Mamun, the intellectual and cultural life continued to flourish under Al-Mamun (813–833) —half Persian through his mother—and his immediate successors. Al-Mamun himself embraced the theories of the Mu'tazilitist rationalist school, which maintained that religious texts should agree with the judgment of reason and that the sacred books were created in the course of time. This cannot be interpreted as "free thought," but rather as a philosophical and theological school which laid more emphasis on rational speculation than on the mere acceptance of tradition.

Justification for such a doctrine, declared to be a state doctrine in 827, was sought in the philosophical works of the Greeks. For this purpose Al-Mamun established in Baghdad in 830 his famous "House of Wisdom" which combined together a library, an academy, and a bureau for the translation of scholarly works. The translators were not interested in Greek literary and poetic works, but mainly in philosophical and scientific ones. From that time on translations were mostly centered in the newly founded academy. It was the most important scholarly and educational institution since the Library of Alexandria was established in the first half of the third century B.C. Even Syrians and Christian Jacobites participated in the translations. Through them Neo-Platonic speculations were introduced into the Arabic mind.

So it came about that towards the end of the tenth century the Arabs possessed translations of all of Aristotle and of other Greek philosophical works, at a time when the West was completely unaware of the Greek philosophical treasures. The Christian West became acquainted with Aristotle and Plato through Arabic translations emanating from Muslim Spain and Sicily.

During this golden age of the Muslim Empire many original works were also composed in Arabic, especially in geography, astronomy, medicine, and history. The old Arabic religious zeal also flared up again and turned against the infidels of Byzantium. The third Abbasid Caliph Al-Mahdi (775–785) renewed the old struggle, trying to regain the territory lost in Armenia during Arab internal conflicts.

The Arab army led by his son Harun, the future caliph, appeared on the Bosporus in 782, on the site of modern Scutari. The Empress Irene had to conclude a humiliating peace involving the payment of large sums to the Arabs. Harun obtained from his father the honorific title Al-Rashid (the straightforward) for his deeds. When Nicephorus I (802–811) refused to pay the promised money, Harun invaded and ravaged Byzantine territory and captured Heraclea and Tyana (806). He imposed a new tribute on the emperor. In 838 Al-Mu'tasim (833–842) tried to obtain a foothold in Asia Minor. His huge army invaded Byzantine territory and occupied Amorion, the birthplace of the ruling dynasty. The attempt to reach Constantinople had to be abandoned because of alarming intelligence of conspiracy in Baghdad. This was the last serious attempt of the Abbasid caliphate to conquer Byzantium. After that the Arabs had again to limit themselves to yearly incursions through the Taurus passes into Asia Minor. The strength of the caliphate was waning because of the slow decomposition of the empire and the formation of petty emirates which were almost independent of the caliphs. The holy war against Byzantium was only continued by one of those emirs, Sayf ad-Dawlah (944–967) of Mosul and Aleppo in Syria. The lightning appearance of Basil II in 995 at Aleppo, coming suddenly from Bulgaria, re-established Byzantine supremacy over the emirate. Saladin (1169–1193), the greatest Arab hero in the holy war against the Crusaders, was more powerful and benefited at least from good communications inside Egypt. He is the real founder of the Ayyub dynasty, named after his uncle who had brought him to Egypt. After establishing the Sunnite "orthodox" faith in that land and adding Syria to his dominions, in 1175 he was granted a diploma of investiture by the Abbasid caliph of all the western provinces with Arabia, Palestine, and central Syria. After strengthening his power he crushed the Crusaders in 1187, even capturing the king of Jerusalem. After a siege of a week the city itself fell into his hands in the same year. Other Crusader territories were also taken, and only Antioch, Tripoli, and Tyre remained in their possession. For his connection with Egypt Saladin could not rely on the old post organization, but used runners and speedy camels. During the siege of Akr (Acre) by the Crusaders Saladin used swimmers and pigeons for communications with the garrison. He tried to communicate with the caliph, asking for help, but none came.

After Saladin's death a period of civil wars among the Ayyubids followed which were partly exploited by the Crusaders. In 1229 even Jerusalem was reconquered by the Franks. Jealousies and quarrels among the Crusaders prevented them from exploiting the weakened situation of Ayyubid Egypt. The last success of the dynasty in its struggle with the Crusaders was the defeat of St. Louis leading the Sixth Crusade.

During the Abbasid period the state post was more fully developed and became a significant feature of the government. Arab historians give the credit to Harun Al-Rashid for the reorganization of the post service (*barid*) on a new basis on the advice of his counsellor Yahya al-Barmaki, from a family of Persian origin. The *barid* was headed by a postmaster called *Sahib-al-Barid*. The relays of the post were called *sikka*. In Persia relays were set up after each 12 kilometers, in Syria and Arabia only at a distance of 24 kilometers.

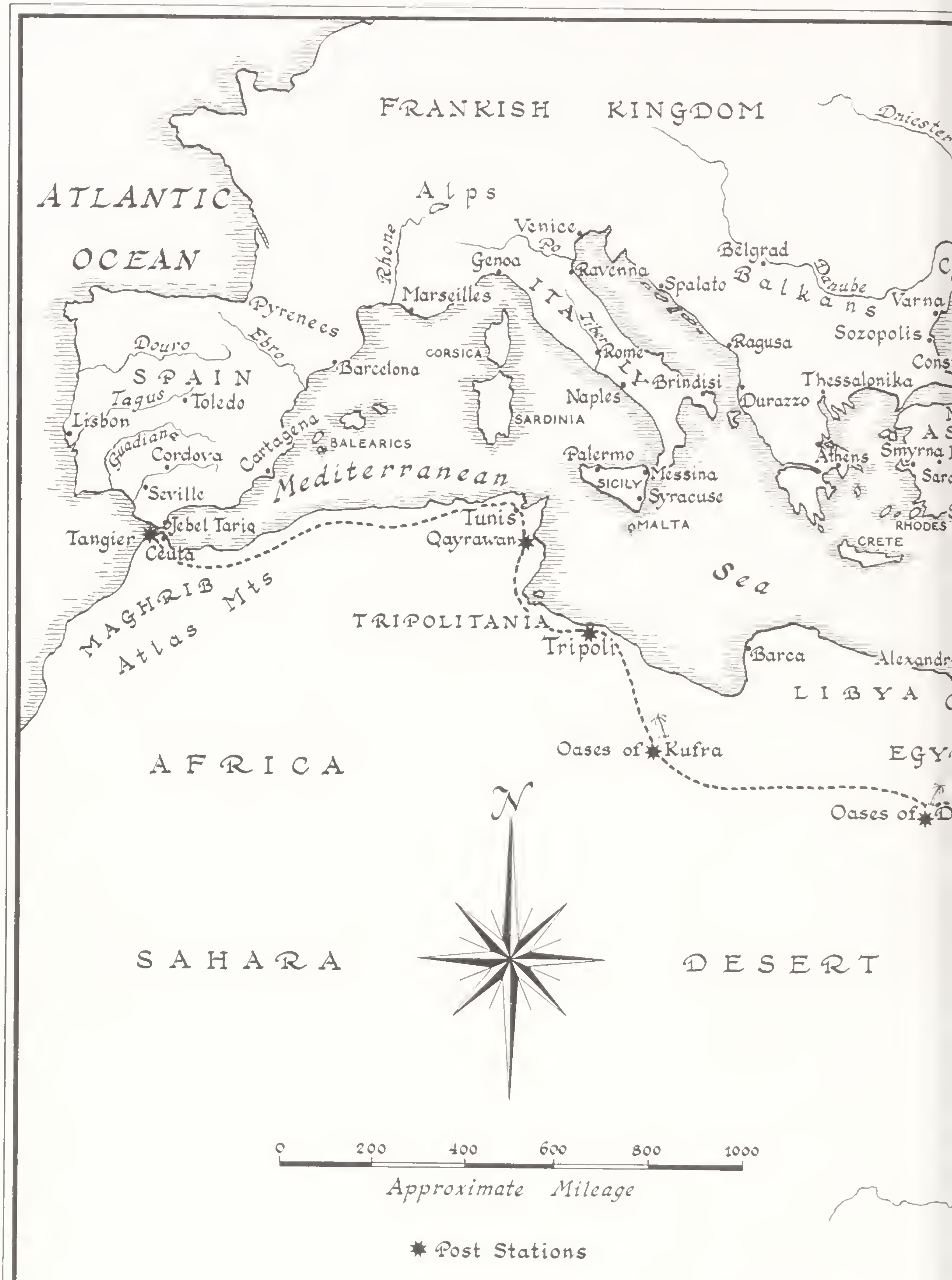
We possess some detailed information on the Abbasid state post. The most important source is the geographical treatise by Ibn Khordadhbeh called *The Book on Roads and Provinces*, describing the commercial roads and the postal stations of the caliphate. The author was himself a postmaster-general—*Sahib-al-Barid*—in al-Djabal, in the province of Iraq al-Ajami, comprising most of modern Persia. His work describes the world known to the Arabs of his time, treating especially the provinces of the caliphate and the division of the taxes, and giving a description of the roads. This book, translated into French by M. Barbier de Maynard in 1765, is based on official documents kept in the state archives.

His work, only fragmentarily preserved, was used by all Arab geographers, but gives little information on the organization of the post. It was originally intended to be an official handbook for the chancery of the government. The author died about the year 912. Ibn Khordadhbeh's work is completed in some ways by the book *On Taxes* (*Kitab al-Kharadj*) written by Kudama, giving more information on the institutions of the state post and enumerating all its itineraries. Kudama occupied the important post of a *hatib*—scribe. He lived in Baghdad and died in 959.

Important information is also given by al-Mukaddasi (Mokaddasi) whose father was an architect. He visited almost all the dominions of the caliphate and described them with great precision. He is one of the best geographers of this period. He gave an account of his twenty years of travel in 986 in a book which could be translated as *The Best Classification of Lands for the Knowledge of the Provinces*.

Many other geographers used these three main works to give information on the Abbasid post roads. After examining all the works concerning the state post, A. Sprenger produced a detailed work in 1864 on the post stations and roads of the Arab Empire with precise maps of all roads.

Detailed descriptions of all the itineraries of the post service were kept at the post headquarters in Baghdad. They indicated not only the established stations or relays but also the distances between them. They could be consulted not only by the officials, envoys, and couriers, but also by merchants, travellers, and pilgrims to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The geographers used them as their main source. The postal roads connected Baghdad with the farthest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Ebro
Douro
SPAIN
Tagus
Toledo
Lisbon
Barcelona
CORSICA
Rome
Ragusa
Sozopolis
Thessalonika
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Brindisi
Durazzo
SARDINIA
Guadiana
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Cartagena
BALEARICS
Palermo
Athens
Smyrna
Seville
Mediterranean Sea
SICILY
Messina
Syracuse
Jebel Tariq
Tangier
Ceuta
Tunis
Qayrawan
MALTA
RHODES
CRETE
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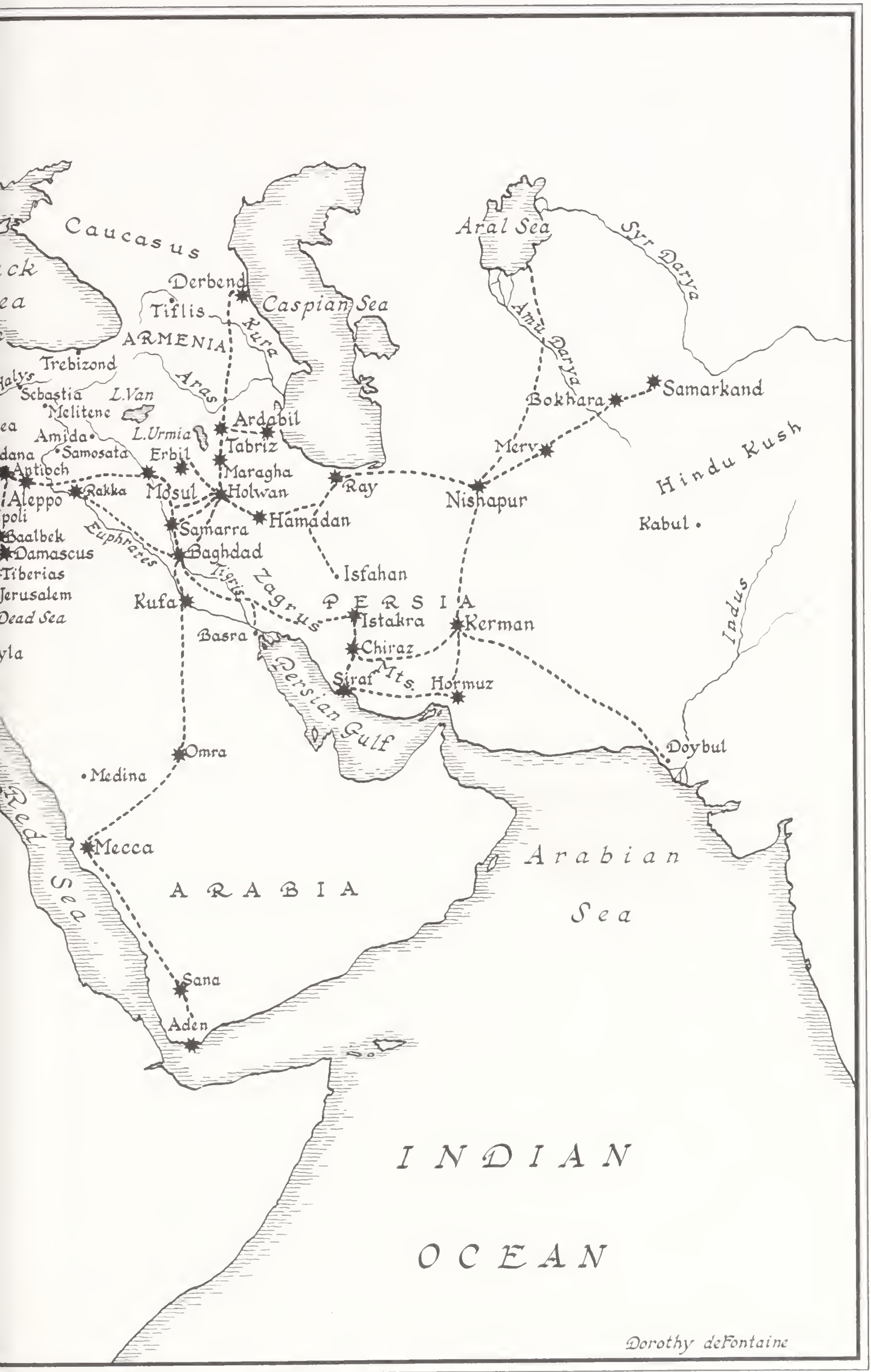
✱ Post Stations

KUDAMA'S POST STATIONS

10th Century


Caucasus
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ARMENIA
Aras
Trebizond
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Amida
L.Urmia
Ardabil
Tabriz
Samosata
Erbil
Maragha
Antioch
Adana
Aleppo
Rakka
Mosul
Holwan
Hamadan
Ray
Samarra
Baalbek
Damascus
Euphrates
Baghdad
Tiberias
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
Kufa
Tigris
Zagrus
Isfahan
PERSIA
Istakra
Kerman
Basra
Chiraz
Siraf
Mts.
Hormuz
Persian Gulf
Omra
Medina
Red Sea
Mecca
ARABIA
Sana
Aden
Aral Sea
Syr Darya
Amu Darya
Bokhara
Samarkand
Merv
Hindu Kush
Nishapur
Kabul
Indus
Doybul
Arabian Sea
INDIAN OCEAN
Dorothy deFontaine

points of the caliphate empire, and it seems that the road system extended even to the vassal lands.

The most important postal roads deserve mention before the functioning of the post is described. The most famous road, important especially for commercial relations with the Far East, was the so-called Khorasan highway connecting Baghdad with the frontier towns on the Syr Darya and the borders of China. It went from Baghdad to Holwan (the ancient Media) and went on from there to the heights of Hamadan. This was the road which the Persian kings had followed when moving from their winter residence in Babylonia to their summer residence high up in Ecbatana. It went from there to Ray (near modern Teheran) reaching Nishapur, the former residence of the Sassanids.

The couriers of the caliphs rode with their messages as far as Nishapur. From there on the relays were under the protection of the princes of Khorasan. Kudama reports that the princes of Khorasan took good care of the relays of the state post through their territory. Nishapur was an important junction. One road went from there towards the northeast following the river Amu Darya to the east coast of the Aral Sea, another went through Merv, Bokhara, Samarkand, and thence, passing the Syr Darya river, to the borders of China.

A third caravan road led through Sedebestan and Kerman (modern Kirman) to the southern point of the Persian Gulf. From Hamadan (ancient Ecbatana) a side road led to the southeast, to Isfahan, the last post relays in the province Iraq al-Ajami where once Khordadhbeh had functioned as the supreme master of the Arab state post. From Holwan, which lies halfway between Baghdad and Hamadan, a road went through Maragha, Ardabil, as far as Tabriz. A branch from this road led to Derbil in Armenia, and another as far as Derbend on the Caspian Sea. Tabriz, Derbil, and Derbend were the last relays and, at the same time, important points of observation for the Arab intelligence service.

The post road towards the southeast went from Baghdad to Wasit in the region between the Tigris and the Euphrates, where it divided. One branch followed the Euphrates and ended at the port of Abadan. The other branch crossed the Tigris and entered Persia. Istakra and Chiraz were the last post relay stations. From these two cities roads went through Kerman to the delta of the Indus and, on the other side, from Chiraz to the ports of Siraf and Hormuz.

The most frequented road, which was used also by the state post, was the pilgrim road to Mecca. It started in Baghdad, following the Euphrates, crossing it at Kufa, and soon afterwards entered the desert. The caliphs took good care not only of the relays of the post, but also of the comfort and security of the pilgrims. Numerous caravanserais were erected with wells and reservoirs of water. The Caliph Al-Mahdi (775–785) took special care of this "holy road." He founded numerous eating houses, opened new wells, erected milestones, and garrisoned soldiers at different places for the protection of the pilgrims.

The central direction of the post in Arabia was at Omra, three days' ride from Mecca. From Omra the road and the post followed the seacoast, turned to Sana, capital of Yemen, and continued as far as the port of Aden.

The relay road going from Baghdad through Samarra, Tekrif, and Mosul, and continuing to the northern boundary of the caliphate with Byzantium and Armenia, was also important. There were stations very near the boundary because it was very important to obtain as rapidly as possible any information on the situation beyond the frontier.

Perhaps even more important was the road which followed the Euphrates from Baghdad as far as Rakka, whence branches led to the fortifications on the northern frontier. Another important branch from this main road, at Balis on the Euphrates, reached Aleppo, turned towards the south, went through Antioch, Baalbek, Damascus, with a connection with Tiberias, and passed through Syria and Palestine as far as Rafah on the frontier of Egypt.

At the time when Khordadhbeh was writing his book, Egypt was almost independent under the Tulunid dynasty. When it was under the direct rule of the Abbasids their postal organization continued from Rafah to Fustat (modern Cairo) and Alexandria, following generally the old Roman *cursus publicus*. From Fustat the road traversed the oases of Dakhla and continued to western Sudan. From the coast the road passed through the oases of Kufra, then turned towards Tripoli, eventually reaching Qayrawan, near ancient Carthage, the former capital of the Aghlabids to whom Harun Al-Rashid had given modern north Africa as vassals. Their territory comprised Tripolitania, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, and was called Maghrib. From Qayrawan the road went on to Tangier on the Atlantic Ocean. This road constituted the only land communication between Spain and the East.

Fortunately, thanks to the Aghlabid dynasty, the post and the roads in the Maghrib were kept in especially good order. The new rulers introduced order in the province and paid special attention to the roads. They erected guardhouses along the coast for the protection of the post and of commercial communications.

The most common means of transportation on these roads was by camel. In cases of urgency, in particular in 914 when Baghdad tried to expel the usurping Fatimid dynasty in Egypt from that province, a fast camel-post was created in order to give the capital daily information on the situation. Express messengers on fast camels are said to have been able to cover as much as 180 kilometers in a day.

Ibn Khordadhbeh, who gave us a very detailed description of Arab post roads, said that in the whole empire there existed 930 post stations. According to the same author the government set aside 151,101 dinars in its budget for the maintenance of the state post. If these figures are correct, every post station had at its disposal about 166 dinars. Since the pay of an Arab soldier—who was, of course, very well paid—was 100 dinars, this indicates that the salary of the postmasters and their servants could not have been very high and the equipment of the stations must have been rather poor. It is, however, most probable that this information only concerns the province of Iraq including Kufa, administered by Khordadhbeh.

As in the Roman and Byzantine Empires, the state post was designed primarily to transmit only official state correspondence, but, according to al-Mas'udi (*Meadows of Gold*, VI, 93), private letters were also transmitted in exceptional cases. In Persia the relays provided the messengers with mules and also horses. In Syria and Arabia camels were mostly used. Only official personnel had the right to use the postal service, but private persons were also admitted to its use on the payment of high fees.

The postal headquarters were in Baghdad. In every city with state agencies a subaltern postmaster was appointed, whose duty it was to supervise the relays in his area and to take care that the official documents reached the next postmaster in due time. Others were charged with the care of the animals needed for the transport.

The duties of the postmaster general are described by Kudama in the following way:

> The state post has its own *Diwan* [bureau]. The letters which are sent from the provinces of the Empire have to be transmitted to the superintendent of the *Diwan*. He has to dispatch them to the places to which they are addressed. He has to present to the caliph the reports of the postmasters and informants, or to prepare excerpts from them. His duty is

> also to see that the postmasters and their employees get their salaries. In all relays he appoints the employees through whose hands the packets of correspondence have to be delivered.

Of course, we can hardly compare the roads and relays of the Arab posts with those of the Roman *cursus publicus*. The roads were not built with such durable materials as were those of the Romans. Stone was not as easily available in the Arab lands. However, it does not seem that the postal roads were merely wide caravan routes with ill-defined boundaries, for there are passages in the description of the Arab post routes which indicate that they were carefully built of hard material. This material could only be brick. Bricks cannot be compared with the solid stone blocks of the Roman *cursus publicus*, but they were quite suitable for the Arab horses (which were not shod), for the camels, and also for the foot-soldiers. Of course, they were not suitable for carriage traffic, but the Arabs did not use carriages on their roads. This kind of transportation was only introduced into Asia by the Mongols, successors of the Arabs.

It may be that the relays of the Arab posts were not as well provided as were the relays of the Roman *cursus publicus*. However, it seems that their installations and provisions were quite adequate. From Kudama's description of some of the stations, we can conclude that many were like small oases in the desert. He speaks of a building for the postmaster, surrounded by palm trees and water reservoirs; sometimes he mentions another construction for the caravans. The postmaster was responsible for the entertainment of official messengers, functionaries, and envoys; thus it was necessary to him to have rooms available at his station for them to spend the night, and to have supplies for their personal needs. The messengers were not supposed to carry provisions likely to slow them down while travelling, and the stations were generally far away from any villages or cities where provisions could be found. Because of the different climate, the stabling for the horses, mules, and camels would, of course, be more primitive than in the Roman relays. We have also to remember that sometimes small troop contingents used the post routes, thus requiring provisioning at some of the stations.

With regard to the rapidity of the transport it seems that the ordinary traffic travelled at twenty miles a day, and a courier bearing urgent messages could manage forty miles a day, the same speed as the best attained by a Roman *cursus velox*.

The postmaster general and his officers had other duties besides those of caring for official correspondence and of supervising the stations and their functioning. The whole postal establishment was subordinated to an espionage system. The postmaster general was, at the same time, the chief of the Arab intelligence service. The geographer Kudama, in his detailed description of the Arab post system, preserved the formula by which a postmaster general was installed in his high function. The caliph stressed that his first duty was to report to the ruler from time to time about the situation in the provinces. With his subordinates he must supervise the activities of the officers charged with the collection of taxes, of the superintendents of state property, of the *kadis* (judges), and all administrative and political organs. He must also report on the situation of the peasants, on the prospects for the harvest, and on the political tendencies of other citizens. He must also supervise the minting and circulation of money and be present when the guard of the caliph was being paid. The caliph exhorted the postmaster to accept from his subordinates only true reports, well founded on facts. Then followed in Kudama's description the enumeration of his duties in the entire administration of the state post; at the end, the caliph asked for separate reports on matters under the surveillance of the postmaster. This meant that the reports were forwarded by the caliph to the relevant *diwans* (bureaus) of the government.

This shows that the function of the director of the post was extremely important; it is no wonder that he was called the "Eye of the Caliph." One can also imagine how easy it was for the postal officials to augment their salaries by using threats or promises.

Not even governors of provinces were exempt from surveillance by this intelligence officer. One report addressed to Caliph Al-Mutawakkil concerning Muhammad Ibn Abdallah, governor of Baghdad, is preserved. The postmaster informed the caliph that in his pilgrimage to Mecca the governor had bought for 100,000 dirhem a most beautiful slave girl and brought her to Baghdad. He was so much in love with her that he was spending days and nights in her company neglecting his duties, especially the examination of complaints sent to the caliph. This could provoke a dangerous situation in the capital and the "most devoted servant" implored the chief of the faithful to intervene.

A postmaster from Khorasan under the Caliph Al-Mamun was present at the mosque when the governor, who led the official prayers, omitted to mention the name of the caliph. This generally implied the declaration of a revolt. The postmaster left the mosque immediately, in order to send a special messenger to the caliph with a report of what was taking place. The governor, however, had observed that the postmaster left the mosque during the prayers and sent his men to arrest him, and the postmaster would have paid with his life for his faithful service if the governor had not been felled by a stroke.

Besides the secret agents of the post system the caliphs had a large contingent of spies and informers at their service. Al-Mansur, the most unscrupulous of the Abbasid rulers, recruited into his espionage system many merchants and humble peddlers who offered their merchandise to many citizens who were ignorant of the real purpose of their visits. He also had in his pay travellers acting as detectives for him. Other caliphs did the same, even Harun Al-Rashid. Al-Mamun is said to have had about 1,700 old women among others in his intelligence service in Baghdad.

These agents were entrusted with the supervision of officials and functionaries in the capital, even of the vizir. They seem to have been subordinated to a special director of intelligence called *khaibar*, who seems to have been independent of the postmaster general. This function was often entrusted to eunuchs or emirs who enjoyed the special confidence of the caliphs. Even when at war the caliphs took with them their *khaibar* and his chief agents.

The despotic government of the caliphs naturally needed a well-organized spy and intelligence service in order to preserve its existence and safeguard public order. Although the activity of the intelligence agents may often have been tiresome for the citizens, there are very few complaints about the existence of such a system. The population was used to surveillance and regarded its organizations as a necessary evil.

The Arab police do not seem to have been as inquisitive about the affairs of the citizens as was the intelligence service. The police department (*diwan al-shurtah*) was, of course, an important section of the government and its head was at the same time commander of the royal bodyguard who was often even appointed vizir. He was responsible for order and public security in the capital and the provinces. He could be described as the chief constable. His powers exceeded those of a *kadi* (judge) in one way. He could act on mere suspicion and threaten with punishment before any proof of guilt was evident. As a general rule only the lower classes and persons suspected of transgressions came under his direct jurisdiction.

There was a police headquarters in every large city. The head of the municipal police was called *muhtasib* and was appointed by the caliph, or his vizir, from among citizens of good standing. He held military rank, and besides his police duties also performed those of a magistrate. He acted as overseer of markets and public morals. Among his duties was that of seeing that the Friday prayers in the mosques were regularly performed; he had authority to admonish those Muslims who avoided the prayer meetings, and to see that the general standards of public morality between the two sexes were maintained.

Otherwise the government left private citizens, and even foreign travellers, generally undisturbed. In the eastern provinces there were, at least in the eighth century, no clerks at the gates of the city to register those who entered or left. A stricter control was exerted in the western provinces. In Egypt, from an early period on, citizens were obliged to be provided with passports. A governor's order of about 720 forbade anyone to move from one place to another or to embark on a journey, if he was not in possession of this document; otherwise he would be arrested and his vessel confiscated. Under the governorship of the Tulunids in Egypt anyone wishing to leave the country had to ask the police for a passport for himself and even for his slaves. Several types of such passports are preserved in Egyptian papyri. The surveillance of foreign visitors seems, however, to have become stricter with time. Mukaddasi, a geographer from the second half of the tenth century, remarked that the arrival of strangers in the cities was carefully noted and that they could depart only after obtaining a special permit.

Another means of obtaining rapid intelligence was by carrier-pigeon post. The Arabs must have developed this kind of letter transport at a rather early date, as it is mentioned in China for the first time about A.D. 700 and could have been introduced there only by Arab or Indian traders. The Romans used carrier pigeons for the communication of news, especially during the siege of cities and in horse races. But the Arabs seem to have discovered the use of carrier pigeons for themselves, as there are numerous indications that the carrier-pigeon post was well developed in the ninth and tenth centuries. It seems that Hamdan Quarmat, the founder of the so-called Quarmatian sect with communistic and revolutionary tendencies, was the first to organize this kind of post on a large and systematic scale. His followers sent messages in this way from all sides to his Babylonian base. During the war with the revolutionary sectarians (927) the future vizir Ibn Muqlah put a man in Anbar with fifty carrier pigeons, whence intelligence was to be sent to Baghdad at regular intervals, but even this was unsatisfactory. Muqlah therefore established a pigeon-post at Aqarquf with one hundred men and one hundred pigeons ordered to bring him information every hour.

In 940, the secretary of the Caliph Al-Muttaqi (940–944) sent a treasonable message to the caliph's enemy by carrier pigeon, but the caliph was fortunate enough to intercept the bird. At that time, the cities of Raqqah and Mosul had established a net of carrier-pigeon posts, so that they were able to communicate with Baghdad, Wasi, Basra, and Kufa within twenty-four hours. This, and other evidence of the usefulness of carrier pigeons in Arab history were collected by A. Mez in his *Renaissance of Islam* (pp. 503, 504) from works of contemporary Arab writers. We shall see that this kind of communication was very popular among the Arabs even in later periods from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

On the other hand, signalling by fire was not used as frequently by the Arabs as it was by the Byzantines. They seem to have made use of it in former Greek provinces, but they did not introduce this method in other, former Persian lands. This kind of signalling appears, however, to have been practiced by the able dynasty of the Aghlabids in north Africa. According to the Arab writer Abulmahasin (I, 174, quoted by A. Mez, p. 502), this system worked well on the coast, especially during the ninth century. It was possible to send a message from Ceuta to Alexandria in one night, and in from three to four hours from Tripoli. The signals were sent from towers put up by the Aghlabids and maintained by the Fatimids, their successors. This system ceased in 1048 during the revolt of the Arab West against the Fatimids, and the towers were destroyed by the rebellious Bedouins, according to the Arab historian Marrakeshi (p. 299).

The organization of the state post and of the intelligence service can only be sketched in broad outline because many of the caliphs changed features of them according to their whims, either prolonging the routes or shortening them, and altering the accustomed procedures. The political changes leading to a gradual disintegration of the unity of the Muslim Empire must also be taken into consideration. This began in the provinces on the borders of the empire and became more evident as the decadence of the caliphate became more pronounced. New dynasties arose in several provinces previously administered by emirs or governors appointed by the caliphs. As early as the ninth century the Tulunids governed Egypt almost independently of Baghdad (868–895). All these dynasties recognized the sovereignty of the caliphs of Baghdad, but almost the only symbol of this was the mentioning of their names in the official Friday prayers.

In spite of these defections and troubles the Abbasid Empire still presented a mighty political structure, as is illustrated by the description of the state revenues for the year 919 under the Caliph Al-Muqtadir (908–932). But after his death the degeneration of the caliphate proceeded rapidly. The contest for power in Baghdad by the vizirs, generals, and eunuchs, and the revolt of the heretical Quarmatians reduced the caliph to impotence. At last the powerful Iranian family of the Buwayhids—which had ruled in Persia since 932, although of Shi'ite belief—took the caliphate under its protection. In 945, one of the family of Buwayhids, Mu'izz al-Dawla, was given the new title of supreme commander (Amir al-Umara) and the Buwayhids reigned in the name of the caliphs until 1055. The caliph's functions became purely honorific. In spite of this degradation the principle of the orthodox Quraysh *Imam* as the successor of the Prophet and symbol of the Muslim community remained firm. The caliph's powers were thus reduced to purely "spiritual" ones.

One of the Arab chroniclers seems to indicate that the Buwayhids suppressed the state post in order to isolate the caliph even more, and to hide from him all that was taking place in the provinces. However, this seems improbable. The "protectors" were rather using the organization of the state post and intelligence service for their own purposes instead of leaving them under the control of the caliphs.

The greatest threat to the Baghdad caliphate was the appearance of a new dynasty, that of the Fatimids, first in modern Tunisia and later in Egypt. This dynasty was the more dangerous as its first ruler, Obaydullah Al-Mahdi, head of the Ismaili sect, had proclaimed himself a descendant of Ali and Fatima, Muhammad's daughter. This gave rise to the name of the dynasty and enabled them to dispute the right of the Abbasids to be caliphs and *imams*. When, in 909, the founder of the dynasty appeared in what is now modern Tunisia, he claimed to be the only legitimate *imam* and caliph descending from Ismail, regarded by the defenders of Ali's legitimacy as the seventh *imam* in line after Ali. Thanks to the propagandists of the Alidic movement, Obaydullah, with his messianic title Al-Mahdi, found numerous followers. This enabled him, thanks to the Ismailic propagandist al-Shi'i, to get rid of the Aghlabid dynasty and to found a state which became famous in Arab history. He first extended his power over a great part of the Maghrib between Tunisia and Ceuta, and his fourth successor, the Caliph Al-Muizz with his valiant general Jawhar, mastered the valley of the Nile (969) replacing the dynasty of Ikhshidids. The general founded a new city near ancient Fustat to which the caliph transferred his capital, giving it the name of al-Qahira, which means "The Dominant" and which is the modern Cairo.

Following the example of his pharaonic and ptolemaic predecessors, the caliph sent his lieutenant Jawhar to occupy Palestine and Syria. During the reign of Al-Aziz (975–996) the Fatimid Empire reached its zenith. The caliph's court was splendid with pomp and ceremony resembling in many ways that of Byzantium. The economic and financial situation permitted him to live in luxury and to build several new mosques, palaces, bridges, and canals. He employed Jewish practitioners as his financial experts and technicians, and was, in general, more tolerant to Jews and Christians than previous caliphs or than his successor Al-Hakim, notorious for his destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Al-Aziz also built a most efficient fleet, which dominated the Mediterranean and encouraged an active maritime trade, not only with the Italian city republics, but also in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This flourishing condition of the Fatimid state was largely maintained, also during the eleventh century, under the caliphate of Al-Mustansir (1036–1094).

The thriving economic situation of the Fatimid state is illustrated to some extent by documents discovered in the Cairo Geniza, a kind of storehouse connected with an old synagogue in Old Cairo (Fustat) where documents and letters bearing the name of God were deposited. It was a repository of discarded documents, most of them written in Hebrew. This archive contained letters and documents from the period of the Fatimids in the eleventh century to the thirteenth. The records, deriving from all countries of the Mediterranean area, contained important information on the social, economic, religious and even political situation of this period, not only of the Jewish communities in the Muslim Empire, but also of its Arab population. The documents were recently described by S. D. Goitein in his book, *A Mediterranean Society*. The first volume is devoted to the economic foundations of this society. Thousands of letters are addressed to commercial partners and reveal that commerce and usury flourished in Tunisia and Egypt during the reign of the Fatimid dynasty. The letters were transported by private agencies which employed special messengers for this purpose, the couriers being called *fayj*. This was a commercial mail service which was, of course, different from the official *barid*, but was to a certain extent organized on the lines of the state post. The commercial mail service had no relay stations, but the correspondence preserved in the Fustat (Old Cairo)

Geniza reveals that it was well organized, and the names of several "postmasters" in Cairo who employed the messengers and organized quite regular services are mentioned in the letters. The commercial mail couriers utilized the regular caravan traffic and other means of transportation. It was customary for the same messenger to carry the mail the whole way to the city of the addressee, as did the *barid* messengers. These couriers were mostly Arabs, but Jewish ones are mentioned as being on the routes from Alexandria to Cairo, Egypt to Palestine, and possibly also on the road from Egypt to Tunisia. Special tariffs were introduced for the conveyance of the letters, and weekly services existed between Cairo and Alexandria and even Qus, the main city of Upper Egypt, although the connection with this city was rather slow. River traffic was organized for commercial purposes, and seafaring, favored by the Fatimids, connected Egyptian merchants with Spain, Italy, and the west.

At the end of the eleventh century the decline started, characterized by a dynastic crisis, the loss of the Syrian possessions, the loss of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099, and intrigues provoked by courtesans, and by jealousy among Turkish, Berber, and Sudanese battalions of the palace guard. The caliphs' power was soon limited to Egypt and, like the caliphs of Baghdad, the rulers of Cairo were reduced to being nominal potentates without authority. It was, therefore, easy for Saladin to reconquer Egypt after the death of the last Fatimid (1174), and to restore it to the nominal authority of the "orthodox" caliph of Baghdad. The success of the Fatimids was due not only to the ability of its caliphs, but also to their excellent intelligence service. They not only took good care of the towers used for fire-signalling, as mentioned above, but also of the state post with its information service in their territories. This is illustrated by the report that, when in 958 the Fatimid army had advanced as far as the Atlantic while conquering Morocco, the commander of the army Jawhar sent a live fish in a glass bottle through the state post to his caliph (A. Mez, p. 501). Moreover, the Fatimids also made use of an extensive net of secret intelligence and propaganda agents called *duat* who propagated the ideas behind the Fatimid pretensions in almost all regions of the Orient. By exploiting the situation created by the Quarmatians and Ismailis, they proclaimed themselves as *imams* installed from above and predestined to universal domination and to temporal and spiritual rule. The methods of their propaganda, based on intelligence obtained about the countries they were determined to bring under their domination, has been studied in detail by M. Canard. In this work he quotes extensively from the writings of the poet Ibn Hani, and the geographer Ibn Haukal, which illustrate how the Fatimid agents prepared the way for the development of the new dynasty, and which points of their propaganda had most moved the Arabs, making them hostile to the Omayyads of Spain, to the Abbasids of Baghdad, and to the Ikhshidids of Egypt. Although their propaganda had some success even in Islamic Spain, it was the Omayyad dynasty in that country that kept the Fatimid at bay by occupying Ceuta.

In the meantime, a new situation was being created in Baghdad by the advent of the Seljuk Turks. About 956, Seljuk, the chieftain of the Turkoman Oghuz moving from the steppes of Turkestan, settled with his people in the region of Bokhara, and accepted the Sunnite "orthodox" Islamic faith. Slowly he extended his power over the neighboring lands. His grandson Tughril penetrated as far as Khorasan, and with his brother he conquered Merv, pushing deeper and deeper into the dominion of the Buwayhids, whose ruling house collapsed. In 1055, Tughril Beg with his Turkomans had reached Baghdad, where he was received by the Caliph Al-Qa'im (1031–1075) as a deliverer, and given the official title *al-sultan* (he with authority, sultan). After liquidating the short-lived revolt of General al-Basasir, who had embraced the cause of the Fatimids, Tughril initiated a new period in the history of the Baghdad caliphate and of the Muslim world. Fresh tribesmen flocked to his armies and, after recovering Syria from the Fatimids, the newly converted infidels launched into a brilliant conquest of new lands for the Muslim faith. Tughril's nephew and successor, Alp Arslan (1063–1072) captured the Byzantine part of Armenia and, in 1071, destroyed the Byzantine army at the famous battle of Manzikert, a blow from which Byzantium never recovered. A great part of Asia Minor became the Sultanate of the Rum. Seljuks and the Turkish element slowly began to predominate in this previously Greek land.

The caliphate of Baghdad continued to exist under the protection of the Seljuk Turks. A kind of diarchy existed in Iraq, the caliphs trying to rule in harmony with their protectors, but conflicts were frequent between the two powers. In vain the caliphs tried at times to regain some freedom of action. On the other hand, the Seljuk Empire soon declined like that of the Abbasids. Its unity did not last long. The dynasty of the Alp Arslan was divided into several houses, each reigning over different dominions which soon withered away into a series of local dynasties, the so-called *atabegs*. They were only nominally vassals of the Great Sultan, but in reality formed a constellation of independent small emirates in Syria and Mesopotamia, where they came into conflict with the Crusaders, in Armenia, and in other provinces. It can readily be imagined that in such circumstances the organization of the state post and intelligence service would only deteriorate. The new protectors of the caliphs failed to appreciate the importance of such institutions for the interests of the state, and they are said to have stopped the post in about 1063.

This, however, does not imply that the government had lost all interest in the intelligence service. Some interesting passages are to be found in the treatise on the art of government (*siyasat-namah*), written by the intelligent Persian Nizam al-Mulk, vizir of the Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah (1073–1092). This work was written at the request of the caliph under whose reign the Seljuk power in the caliphate of Baghdad had reached its zenith. It is one of the most remarkable Muslim treatises on the art of government, although not as significant as the Hellenistic and Byzantine treatises on kingship.

In chapter ten, Nizam stresses the necessity for an intelligence service for the ruler (Schefer, *Nizam al-Mulk*):

> It is indispensable for a sovereign to obtain information on his subjects and his soldiers, on all which happens near him or in distant regions, and to know about everything which is occurring, be it of small or great importance. If he does not do so, this will prove a disgrace, a proof of his negligence and neglect of justice. . . . Therefore, the appointment of a master of state posts is absolutely necessary. During the age of paganism and during the reign of Islam, the sovereigns used to obtain from this functionary the most recent information and they used to know what kind of fortunate or unfortunate events had occurred. Everybody knew, in this way, that the sovereign was vigilant. Officers who were well informed about all that was happening and who kept the oppressors in suspense, were posted everywhere. The subjects lived in peace, working under the protection of the sovereign's justice, for their own sustenance and for the increase of general prosperity.

Then the author advises the sovereign to choose the surveyors carefully because their task is delicate and full of responsibility. They have to be paid regularly. The ruler has to admonish them if they are negligent, but he has also to give special compensation for outstanding services. "Sending out police agents and spies shows that the ruler is just, vigilant, and sagacious. If he behaves as I have indicated, his state will flourish."

These words show that the vizir was well aware of the importance of a good intelligence service, and knew about the institution of the state post, its function and its history. When mentioning that it was formerly in use by pagan rulers, he has in mind above all the Persians. The admonition suggests perhaps that, in his time, these institutions were neglected, but not completely suspended.

This seems to be indicated also by the author in chapter fourteen, in which he speaks of the necessity of placing runners at the fixed posts on all the principal roads, who should be paid monthly. These couriers should be able to obtain information about everything which happened within a radius of fifty *parasangs* (150 km.). According to the old custom, they would be commanded by officers who would take care of their needs. This seems to imply that the postal service was being replaced by special couriers or emissaries. The use of runners (*su-at*) is mentioned for the first time during the period of the Buwayhids, who were accused of having curtailed the state post service.

Chapters twenty and twenty-one are also interesting, as they give the ruler advice on how to receive embassies from foreign lands and how to keep its members under surveillance, because they are certainly interested in many matters other than the object of their embassy, especially those of military importance. One can see that the Arabs were as much on guard when receiving foreign ambassadors as were the Byzantines. In chapter thirty-four, the vizir admonishes the ruler to keep a close watch on all the personnel guarding his palaces. A special investigation should be made of any one of them seen in the company of a foreigner.

However, with the dismemberment of the Seljuk Empire into provinces governed by independent *emirs* or *atabegs*, the organization of the state post and other intelligence services degenerated. It was of no use to the Muslim rulers who regarded it as their religious duty to dislodge the Crusaders from Syria and Palestine. Zangi, who had cut for himself a principality containing Aleppo, one of the greatest created by the *atabegs*, and who had started successfully the reconquest of lost lands, had relay runners and carrier pigeons to obtain the intelligence he needed.

3. Intelligence in the Mamluk Empire

As in the Fatimid period, the last Ayyubid rulers of Egypt became increasingly dependent on their guard, composed mainly of enfranchised Turkic and Cuman slaves, called Mamluks. Finally, in 1250, the Mamluk Aybak became titular ruler and founder of the Mamluk dynasty. In order to consolidate his kingdom and secure its frontiers, Aybak spent most of his time with his army in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. In 1257 he was murdered by his jealous second wife while in his bath. The murderess herself was battered to death with the wooden shoes of the slaves of Aybak's first wife. The regent Qutuz deposed Aybak's young son and usurped the throne. He repulsed the attack of Syrian Ayyubids claiming Egypt; in 1260 he was threatened by the Mongol army led by Hulägu. The Mongols were defeated in Syria, and Egypt was spared the horrible devastation suffered by its neighbors at the hands of the Mongols. It was the Mamluk ruler Baybars (1260–1277) who began a new period in the development of Egypt and Syria. He had distinguished himself in the defeat of the Mongols who had invaded Syria in 1260. Angered that the usurper Qutuz did not reward him with Aleppo in Syria as a fief for his services, Baybars killed him and declared himself sultan. He was originally a Turkic slave, but he became the first great Mamluk ruler and the true founder of the Mamluk Empire. He was an excellent military leader, and it was his generalship in Syria which broke the backbone of the Crusaders and permitted his two successors to chase the last of them out of Syria. He extended his dominion over the Berbers, and over Nubia in the south which had remained under the rule of the Egyptian sultans. He not only reorganized his army, but also rebuilt the navy, strengthened the fortresses of Syria, and dug new canals. His most important contribution to the administration of his empire was the restoration of the old Arab intelligence system based on a regular post service.

Contemporary historians of Baybars say little of this achievement, although the transport of official letters, implying the existence of the post, is often mentioned in the *Sirat* of al-Quadi Muki al-din, but we find detailed information of this new creation in the valuable treatise *al-Tarif*, on government and the state, composed by al-Omari in 1348. Chapter six of this treatise, translated by R. Hartmann, is devoted to the history of the Arab state post and its recreation by Baybars.

The author gives first a short history of the post, admitting its previous existence under the Persian rulers and the Roman emperors. The first Islamic ruler who founded the state post was Muawiya of the Omayyad dynasty. From Omari's description it is clear that the Persian and Byzantine system was simply imitated by this caliph. He even stated that both Persian and Greek employees had executed his orders by creating stations and providing them with mules and saddle bags in which to carry the letters. He tells us that the Caliph Walid I used the post for his construction works and for the transport of mosaics from Constantinople. During the last years of the Omayyad dynasty the post degenerated, chiefly because of the troubles caused by the revolt of the Abbasids. A temporary information service by post was put into force by Al-Mahdi during the campaign of his son Al-Rashid against Constantinople.

Then Omari speaks of the founding of the state post by the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, about the suspension of the services by the Buwayhids in order to keep the caliph under their influence, and the complete suppression of the post by the Seljuk rulers. After that only runners and messengers on camels were employed to transmit important intelligence.

Following this historical introduction Omari gives some details about the revival of the state post by Baybars. After having confirmed his sovereignty over Egypt and Syria as far as the Euphrates, Baybars reorganized the new provinces and appointed a prefect, a vizir, and a state secretary for Damascus. The author of the *Tarif* confesses that the secretary of the chancery was his uncle, Sharaf ad-Din. Before his departure to Damascus, the new secretary approached the sultan asking for instructions. The ruler expressed the desire for frequent information on the situation at the earliest date, especially on the movements among the Mongols and Franks (Crusaders). "If you can achieve it that I will have to pass not one morning and not one night without receiving a report from you, do that." Omari's uncle reminded his master that during the reign of the caliphs this service was rendered by the state post and he proposed to reconstruct it. Baybars accepted the proposal and charged him to set up the state post. The information described above had been given to Omari by his uncle who had learned it from the director of the post. He calls the post "the wings of Islam which cannot be trimmed and the tip of its wing which cannot be cut off."

This narrative is important. It recalls the words with which Nizam had described the importance of the state post. Both authors knew that this institution was introduced into the Arab Empire in imitation of the Persian and Roman post services. Omari is even more outspoken when confessing that it was introduced by order of the Caliph Muawiya by Persians and Greeks. Although it was disbanded during the Seljuk period, its existence under the Omayyads and Abbasids, and the services it had rendered to the state, were not unknown to Arab historians, geographers, and other writers of different periods whose works were read by Arab intellectuals of all times.

We cannot, therefore, exclude the probability that Omari's uncle and Baybars consciously intended to re-introduce something whose existence and main features in Arab history were familiar to Arab intellectuals. The new state post was, however, a much better organized and a more complicated institution than the post which had fallen into desuetude. First of all, it was set up for the exclusive use of the sultan as a rapid information service. It had nothing in common with commercial and economic interests, but had an exclusively military and administrative character. First of all, the sultan as supreme commander of the army and chief of state demanded to be informed of all enemy movements, in this case, of the Mongols and the Crusader states. Then he needed rapid communication of his orders to all parts of his empire; he needed to recall *emirs* and other officers to his residence and to convoy diplomatic delegations. Above all, he also wanted to be informed about all dangers of subversive movements. These were all purely political affairs for the information and decisions of the chief of state.

Al-Makrizi, in his *Suluk* (translated by Quatremère), gives us some interesting information about the regulations issued by Baybars concerning the functioning of the *barid*. He decreed that all information should be read in his presence by his secretary who should have at his disposal sheets of paper on which the sultan's answer or his orders should be written, according to the information obtained. The courier who brought the information should be sent back after the shortest delay with the sultan's reply or order. The sultan took this very seriously. One day, on his travels, while he was bathing in his tent, a courier arrived. Without taking the time to dress he opened and read the letter. Baybars did not devolve much influence to his vizir. His secretary of state was instructed to read the information to the sultan and prepare the answer.

The couriers were chosen from among the royal retainers (*khassakiya*) who seemed to be particularly suited for such a confidential task, some of whom were given the title of *baridi*. They lived in the Citadel in Cairo in order to be ready at any time for service. They were given a silver plaque to put under their robe which was secured by a large yellow silk foulard. This floated freely on their backs so that they could be easily recognized as royal couriers. Relay stations which were established on the postal road were provided with horses and with all the necessities which the couriers and their mounts needed. The commander of the couriers was responsible for seeing that they could travel with both speed and comfort.

The relay horses might be handed over only to a royal functionary who was in possession of an order of requisition, because the service was intended only for state affairs. The couriers were ex-

The Citadel of Cairo, center of Government for Saladin and the Mamluks (K. A. C. Creswell, *Fortifications in Islam before 1250*).

horted not to maltreat their horses. Baybars, incognito, made inspections of the functioning of the service, and was delighted when he was once refused a horse by the commander of a relay station because he did not have the sultan's requisition order for the animal.

This information service functioned well. A message from Damascus could reach the sultan's residence in Cairo in four days, and in some urgent cases even in two days. The sultan expanded the service to every important place and was supplied with information from the different provinces twice a week. He sent out his orders for the replacement or investiture of functionaries by the same means and never regretted the expenditure which the erection of this institution required.

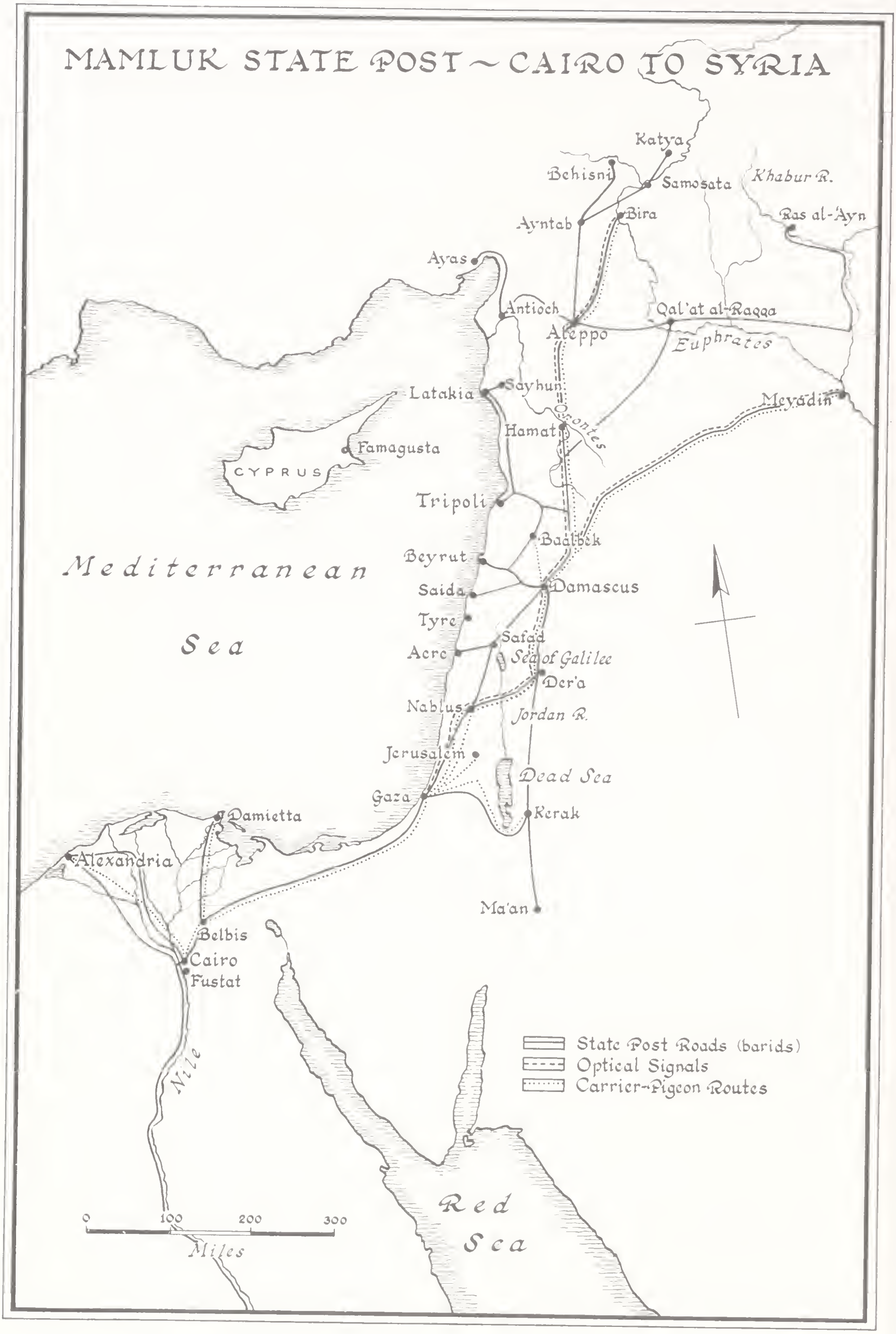
How well this service functioned is illustrated by the report given by al-Makrizi, the historian of the Mamluks, for the year 927. A new invasion into Syria by the Mongols that year filled Damascus with frightened refugees who were trying at all cost to reach safety in Egypt. Baybars, who was at that time in Damascus, restored order and soon stopped the invaders. At three o'clock on the morning of September 13 he sent a messenger to Cairo with the order to mobilize the Egyptian cavalry. The courier, using the newly-established post service, arrived in Cairo at three o'clock in the afternoon of September 20. Thus he traversed the long distance between the two cities in about sixty hours. The mobilized cavalry of three thousand left Cairo on September 21 and reached Damascus on October 4. Quatremère's translation of the passage was corrected by G. Weil in vol. 4 (p. 74) of his history of the caliphs.

The *Tarif* gives a very detailed description of the postal roads, enumerating all relays and their distances. All roads started from Cairo, and the road to Gaza followed the traditional route through Belbis, whence a bifurcation led to Damietta. At Katya on the Syriac frontier, a bureau of control was established. Every traveller was inspected and only permitted to continue when able to present a *laissez-passer*. All merchandise was examined and taxed by the customs officers. From Gaza the road went on to Damascus, whence all the principalities of Syria as far as Aleppo could be reached. The traveller Ibn Batuta reports that a courier had traversed the distance between Cairo and Aleppo in five days, although an ordinary traveller needed thirty-four days from Cairo to Aleppo, and nine days from Gaza to Cairo. Alexandria was connected with Cairo by two roads; one went through the desert while the other ran between the two branches of the Nile river to Kalioub and Menouf. One needed three days on this road. Then a road following the Nile was directed towards the commercial center of Qus. From there a branch led to Aswan, a mining center, then to Nubia, to the Red Sea port of Aidhab, and to Sawakin.

The sultan directed the postal service in Egypt as its sovereign and prefect, but he appointed as his representative in Damascus *wali-l-barid,* an emir, the sultan's deputy. The horses had to be furnished by the sultan, but, in practice, only the horses in the relays at Cairo and in the territory of Egypt proper were paid for out of the sultan's privy purse. In Syria, the relay horses were furnished by the local tribes which were compensated by land grants. The relay posts were, naturally, simple constructions and the distances between them were not always regular, for it was important that each relay post should possess a well, which necessity often determined the distances between them. Post roads and relays were gradually established during the reign of Baybars. However, the routes were extended and the relays improved by his successors.

Although the postal service was quite rapid considering the means of transport at that time, Baybars was anxious to obtain even more rapid information in case of emergency. He therefore re-established methodically another post by carrier pigeon. The author of the *Tarif* enumerates all the carrier-pigeon stations, the main one being erected in the Citadel at Cairo. Other principal centers were at Gaza, Damascus, and Aleppo. Secondary stations were established on the roofs of the more important relays of the state post. The Fatimid dynasty had regularly used this kind of information service which was, however, considerably improved by Baybars and his successors. The royal carrier pigeons wore rings around their necks and legs. A type of extra fine paper was specially selected for writing the messages. The dispatch was attached to the neck or tail of the bird. The Arabs succeeded in breeding different species of pigeons, and the best fitted were trained for speed and reliability. Several writings exist dealing with the breeding of pigeons. It seems that the Fatimids had established a special *diwan* (bureau) for the carrier-pigeon post with precise pedigrees of certain sub-species particularly fitted for this kind of information service. The pigeon post was the more useful as the birds could reach places beyond the stations of the post service with which it was intimately connected.

In order to complete these two information services, Baybars further introduced optic signalling. Like the state and pigeon posts this system had, above all, a military character. It was most important to be kept informed in the shortest possible time of the military movements of the Mongols on the Syrian frontier, or of the Crusaders



MAMLUK STATE POST ~ CAIRO TO SYRIA

Katya
Behisni
Samosata
Khabur R.
Ayntab
Bira
Ras al-'Ayn
Ayas
Antioch
Qal'at al-Raqqa
Aleppo
Euphrates
Latakia
Sayhun
Orontes
Meyadin
Hamat
Famagusta
CYPRUS
Tripoli
Baalbek
Beyrut
Mediterranean
Damascus
Saida
Tyre
Sea
Safad
Acre
Sea of Galilee
Der'a
Nablus
Jordan R.
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
Gaza
Kerak
Damietta
Alexandria
Ma'an
Belbis
Cairo
Fustat
Nile
State Post Roads (barids)
Optical Signals
Carrier-Pigeon Routes
0
100
200
300
Miles
Red
Sea

in the coastal cities they had occupied. This system of information was simpler and not as costly as the state post. From the frontiers of the empire which were in danger of being invaded, optic signals by fire during the night and by smoke during daylight were transmitted through special stations on elevated ground to Damascus, and from there to Gaza. From Gaza it was easy to transmit the information obtained to Cairo by rapid couriers on the state post, or by carrier pigeons. The stations for optic signalling were generally established near the relays of the post, sometimes also on the towers of the relays.

The successors of Baybars continued his policy, using and improving the *barid*. During the reign of young rulers, however, the power of the sultan suffered a loss of prestige due to the intrigues of high functionaries. This situation changed when Al-Malik-Al-Nasir-Muhammad ended the intrigues and firmly re-established himself on the sultan's throne from 1309 to 1340. In order to prevent the recurrence of former troubles he suppressed the function of the vizir and gave full powers to the secretary of state. He became famous for his luxurious living and fervor in building public works, such as the canal connecting Alexandria with the Nile, and an aqueduct to the Citadel of Cairo, and many beautiful mosques, public baths, and schools.

The transfer of administrative power from the vizir to the secretary of state, who was not a "man of the sword" but an intellectual well versed in the bureaucratic traditions, was, in many ways, advantageous for the control of the country. The direction of the state post was in the hands of the state secretary who made some changes in the procedure concerning the sending of the couriers and the presentation of their messages to the sultan. The couriers were given a special note by the secretary indicating their identity and the order of the sultan giving them the right to use the transport by the post, and specifying the number of horses they were permitted to use. The courier's name, the motive of his mission, and the hour of his departure were marked in a special register kept in the chancery. The note was, at the same time, the *laissez-passer* for the courier on the Syrian frontier. The reception of the messenger by the sultan was made more solemn. In the presence of other courtiers the secretary presented the message to the sultan and read it to him. It became a custom that the messenger who had arrived towards nightfall should spend the night outside the city and was only introduced into the presence of the sultan the next morning. The number of pages and also the personnel of the relays were augmented.

The autobiography of Abu-al-Fida gives a very lively picture of the almost perfect functioning of the state post. Abu-al-Fida (1273–1331) entered the military service of Sultan Al-Malik-Al-Nasir and was installed in 1310 as governor of Hamat, in Syria. Later he received the rank of a prince and the hereditary rank of a sultan. He is famous particularly for his historical and geographical works. His autobiography was translated by W. Slane. He very often had to use the state post, and from his description we get a very good idea of how well it functioned, and how richly the relay stations were provisioned. When travelling by the state post in 1320 at the invitation of the sultan, Abu-al-Fida confesses that he did not take any horses from his own stable nor any provisions for himself on the long journey from Hamat to Cairo, a distance of about one hundred and thirty miles. He was accompanied, of course, by his suite.

During the reign of Nasir the roads of the *barid* leading to the coastal cities and to important commercial centers were reorganized. Some of the relays were transformed into caravanserais for the use of merchants and their transports. The customs duties paid by the merchants covered the expenses of the erection and entertainment of the caravanserais. Some new secondary roads were also made, connecting the chief cities of the neighboring provinces.

The newly-established relays and caravanserais were more spacious and of greater architectural interest, and some of them were fortified. The remains of some of these relays were recently discovered by J. Sauvaget who described them in his study of the Mamluk post. The roads of the state post could also be used by merchants and ordinary travellers. For their comfort water tanks and fountains were built near the caravanserais. The relays were garrisoned by armed watchmen. The officers who assured the security of the roads formed a kind of permanent police force. New settlements were often established near the caravanserais because of the protection they afforded. Small shops built on the roads by enterprising Arabs catered for all the needs of travellers and their animals. It was said that even a woman could safely travel alone from Damascus to Cairo on horse or on foot without needing any special provision of food or water, because she could buy all she needed on the road.

During the reign of Nasir the *barid* was burdened with another service which had nothing in common with the original plan of the state post, the transport of snow from Damascus to Cairo. This was a luxury service destined to refresh the sultan's drinks. This transport of snow was originally done by three, later by eleven vessels. When the road of the *barid* had been reorganized and probably also enlarged, relays of camels were stationed in the caravanserais along the entire route and the snow was transported by the camels, because they seemed speedier and more convenient. This again shows that the *barid* was regarded as a personal service for the sultan to serve all his needs and fancies.

During the first half of the fourteenth century the state post functioned perfectly. However, after the death of Nasir (1340) the old troubles which were disorganizing the political life of the empire reappeared—the jealousy and ambitions of the Mamluks made the succession to the throne and the administration insecure. "Men of the sword" came to the top once more, and the direction of the *barid* was again taken from the hands of the civil administrators. The organization could only function well under the strict direction of men conscious of their responsibility. In 1346 we learn that the relays between Cairo and Damascus were disorganized. During the period of the new dynasty of Circassian Mamluks—the Burdji—anarchy became even more general. In such circumstances, of course, the delicate organism of the post could only deteriorate rapidly. The invasion of the Mongol Sultan Tamerlane in 1400 gave the *coup de grâce* to the Mamluk *barid*. Syrian relays were deprived of their horses and men by the invader. Limited only to Egyptian territory the *barid* lost most of its importance, and during the reign of Al Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1412–1421) it ceased to function as a regular state service.

The discovery in 1497 of a passage around the Cape of Good Hope to India by Vasco da Gama contributed to the poverty and misery of the land, because gradually most of the traffic in products from India and Arabia was diverted from Syrian and Egyptian ports. This caused the disappearance of the main source of national income. The corruption of many sultans, their emirs and Mamluk slaves weakened the state structure and facilitated the successful invasion of Syria by the Ottoman Turks. Sultan Selim I (1512–1520), after defeating the Persians, occupied Mesopotamia and part of Armenia. In 1516 he defeated the Mamluk army near Aleppo and occupied Syria. In 1517 his army destroyed the forces of the Sultan of Egypt near Cairo. The Mamluk Empire became part of the new Ottoman Empire, which thus replaced both the Byzantine and the Arab Empires.

4. Arab Intelligence on Byzantium

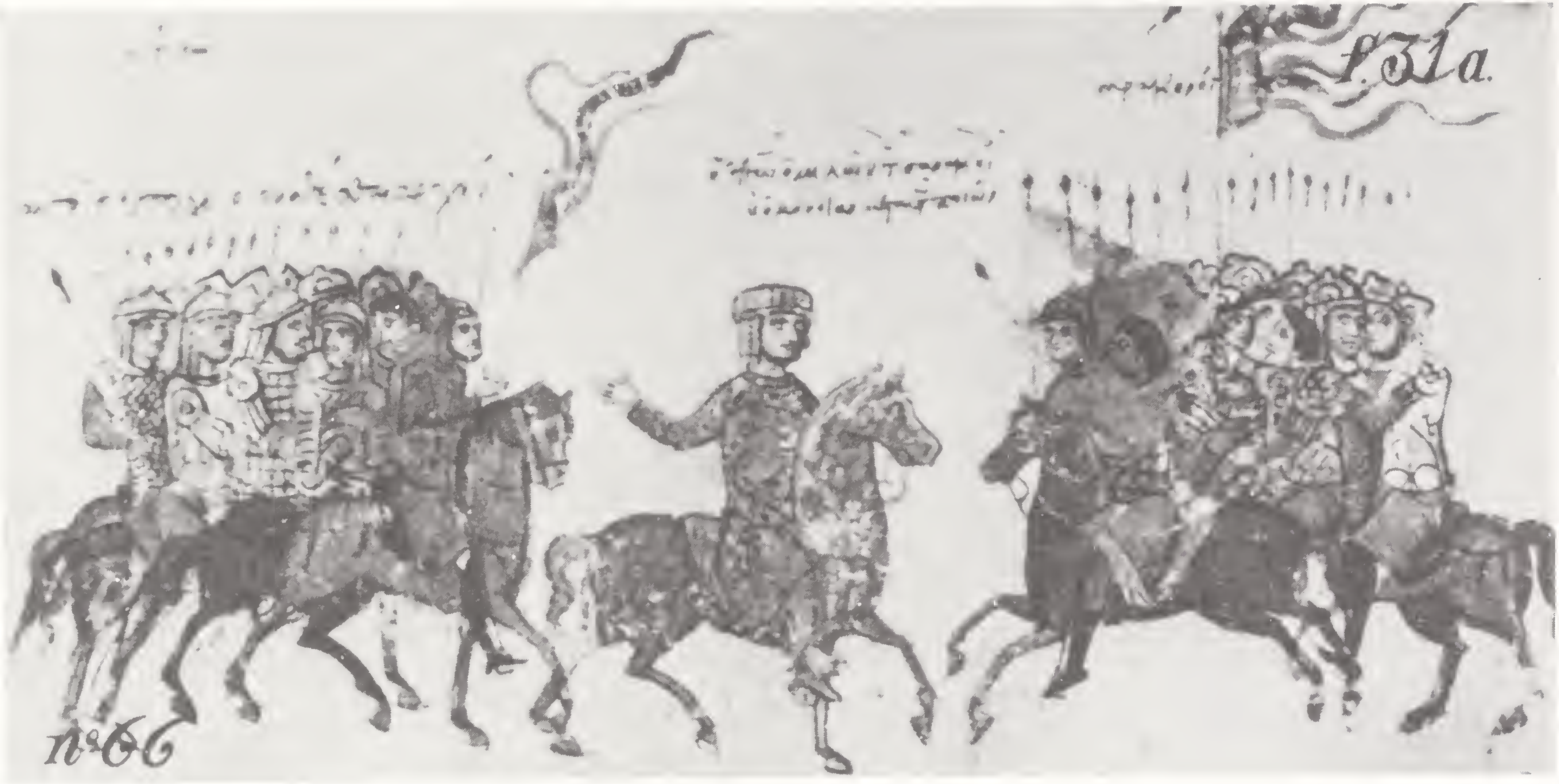
It was natural that the caliphs should try to obtain as much information as possible about Byzantium, their archenemy. In this respect they were probably in a less favorable position reciprocally than the

Byzantines, because there were no Arab settlements in Byzantine territory and the hostility of the Christian inhabitants of Asia Minor made it difficult to win over some of them to act as spies or informers for the Arabs. But, during the first period of their conquest they must frequently have obtained the cooperation of the Christian population, especially in Syria. Abu Yusuf Ja'kab ibn Ibrahim (731–798) in his *Kitab al-Kharadj* (*On Taxes*, tr. E. Fagnan) says in the chapter "On churches, synagogues, and crosses" that the Christian population of conquered cities, realizing that the conquerors were leaving them their places of worship and treating them well, had volunteered to send spies into the land of Rūm (Byzantium) to obtain information of a military nature. Their spies brought intelligence of a great concentration of imperial troops, and the chiefs of the cities passed this information on to their *emir*. In recompense for this service the *emir* gave them back the sums they had paid in taxes.

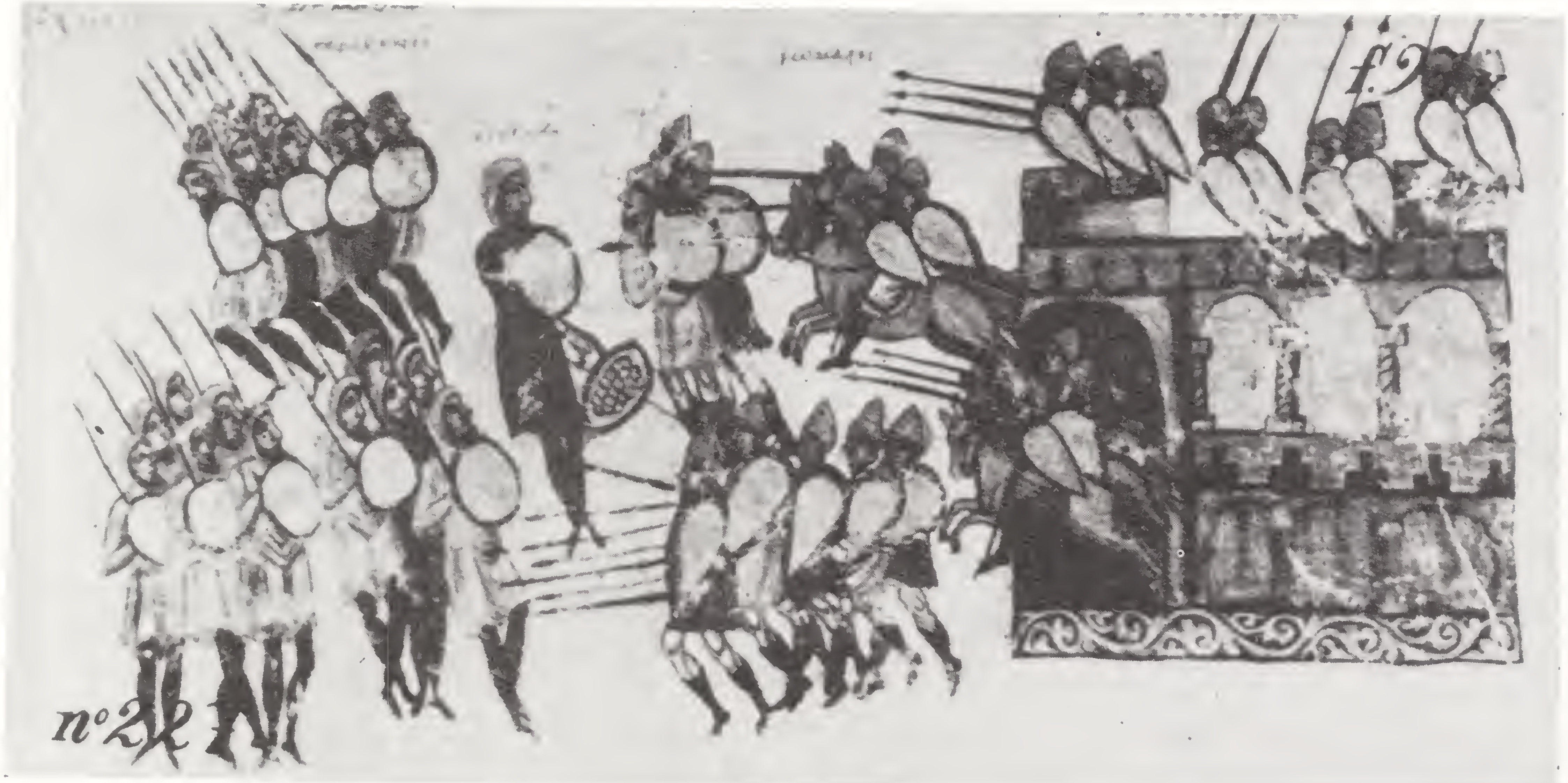
One can imagine that for similar rewards the Arabs, even in later periods, could find Christian subjects willing to act as spies in Byzantine territory. Many of them continued the commercial relations with Byzantium which they had established in earlier times when their lands were Byzantine provinces.

There were also Byzantine deserters who for political or other reasons sought refuge in the caliphate, offering their services to the Arabs. The most prominent of such refugees was the famous general, Thomas the Slavonic. He took shelter among the Arabs in 797, the year when the Empress Irene dethroned and blinded her son, Constantine V. Thomas stayed in the caliphate for almost twenty-five years. In 820, when Michael II had become emperor after the assassination of Leo V, Thomas, who had already taken Armenia and the Byzantine possessions in the Caucasian region, invaded Asia Minor after concluding an alliance with the Caliph Al-Mamun. The caliph ordered the Patriarch of Antioch to crown Thomas as the new emperor. Thomas provoked a dangerous insurrection supported mostly by the lower classes. With the help of the Arabs he attempted to take Constantinople in 821, but was ultimately defeated and executed.

It is remarkable that Thomas should have dared to provoke and lead a revolt against the emperor after such a long stay in Baghdad. This can perhaps be explained by the extreme precaution with which the Arabs used to treat such refugees. Abu Yusuf Ja'kab, in his *Kitab*, gives a chapter of advice to the caliph on how to treat foreigners who pass the Arab frontier, who declare that they are com-



The insurgent Thomas makes an alliance with the Arabs (ca. 820) (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 31a).



The Byzantine army defends Europos against the Emir of Tarsus (*Skyllitzes Matritensis*, fol. 97v).

ing to ask protection for themselves and their family, or say that they are envoys from an infidel ruler to the caliph. He says:

> . . . when a man passes the frontier and tries to avoid the Arab frontier officers no credence should be given to what he says, and he should not be allowed to enter Arab territory. If he does not avoid the frontier posts one should believe what he says. When it has become evident that the man pretending to be an envoy is bringing a message and gifts to the caliph, he should be left unmolested. He should pay customs duties only for things which he intends to sell.
>
> If a foreigner who has been stopped declares he has left his country in order to become a Muslim, he should not be trusted. What he brings with him should be regarded as spoils for the faithful, unless he really becomes a convert. As far as concerns such a person one has a choice between putting him to death or selling him as a slave.
>
> As far as concerns people who have been convicted of spying, if they are foreigners from a hostile country, Jews, Christians, or Persians who are Arab subjects, they must be decapitated. If they are bad Muslims, one has to inflict painful punishment on them and put them into prison for a long term.

Ja'kab also gives instructions as to how the police stations on the frontier should be established and how they should function:

> It is necessary for the caliph to establish police stations on the frontier on roads which lead to the countries of the polytheists. The soldiers who are stationed in them are bound to inspect all merchants passing through. The guards must confiscate all weapons the merchants are carrying with them and such merchants must be sent back. Men who are exporting slaves must also be sent back. All letters which may be found in their possession are to be read, and if they contain something which gives information on Muslim affairs, the bearer of the letter must be arrested and sent to the caliph, who will take the appropriate measures in such a matter.

All this shows that the Arab frontier was well guarded against spies from enemy territory and that all precautions were taken to prevent any leakage of intelligence of Muslim affairs to Byzantium.

Of course, important refugees were always accepted by the Arabs with gladness. This is also shown by the case of the *stratege* Manuel, who is said to have been the uncle of the Empress Theodora. There are many reports of his career by several Byzantine historians which differ considerably and which contain legendary and romantic traits. He is said to have saved the life of the Emperor Theophilus in one encounter with the Arabs, and had to seek refuge in the caliphate when the emperor had given credence to false rumors that Manuel was aspiring to the imperial throne. His escape was ascribed to the year 830. All this information has been shown to be legendary. According to the research of H. Grégoire and M. Canard, reviewed by the latter in his edition of V. Vasiliev's *Byzance et les Arabes* (I, pp. 413 ff.), Manuel occupied an important position during the reign of Leo V and escaped to the Arabs during the reign of Michael II (820–829), probably during the insurrection of Thomas. He was well received by the Caliph Al-Mamun and, according to the *Continuator* of Theophanes (p. 118), seems to have rendered great services to the caliph in battling with the rebellious population of Khorasan.

When Theophilus had become emperor in 829, he was anxious to bring Manuel, an uncle of his wife, back to Constantinople. He sent an embassy to Al-Mamun to announce the beginning of his reign, as was the diplomatic custom, and his ambassador appears to have been John the Grammarian, the future iconoclastic patriarch. Another object of this embassy was to arrange an exchange of war prisoners. Probably at the request of Theophilus, John succeeded in making contact with Manuel. One source says that he did so in the disguise of a poor pilgrim on his way to Jerusalem, which is probably another legend added to Manuel's history. After assuring Manuel that he had obtained a complete pardon from the empress, he persuaded him to escape from the Arabs. Later Manuel again obtained an important post in Byzantium, and he died in 838 when the Arabs occupied Amorium.

The prisoners of war who returned to their native country formed another possible source of intelligence about Byzantium. The exchange of prisoners of war between Byzantium and the Arabs had become a very interesting feature in the relations between the two empires. The exchange generally took place on the river Lamos and was often inaugurated by embassies sent by the emperors to the caliphs, or vice versa. A special ceremonial accompanied these exchanges, the prisoners being gathered together from all sides and brought to the river under guard of military detachments accompanying the senior officers charged by both sovereigns with effecting the exchange. The captives were counted and made to pass over a bridge on the river one by one, first a Christian, then a Muslim. If the number of Christian prisoners was not equal to that of the Muslims, or vice versa, the rest of the prisoners could be ransomed by money provided by the respective governments.

In his *Book of Indications* (translated into French by B. Carra de Vaux), pp. 255–263, al-Mas'udi gives a very detailed account of twelve very important exchanges of prisoners made during the reign of the Abbasids. The first was concluded in 811 during the reigns of Nicephorus I and the Caliph Al-Amin on the river Lamos. The last exchange took place under Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and the Caliph Al-Muti in 957, and Mas'udi gives the number of exchanged prisoners and the names of the supervisors of the exchange, often also adding how long the ritual lasted.

Al-Mas'udi's description of the third exchange, which took place in 845 under the reigns of the Emperor Michael III (or Theodora) and the Caliph Al-Wathiq, deserves special attention. After giving the name of the Arab in charge of the exchange and the number of exchanged Arab prisoners, Mas'udi continues:

> One saw among them—probably among the prisoners from Zapetra [Sozopetra, conquered by the Byzantines in 837] also Moslim, the son of Abu Moslim el-Djarmi, a man who knew well the lands of the frontier, the Greeks and their country, and who had composed works in which he describes their history, their kings, their high officials, their country, the roads which lead to them and which pass through their country, the proper seasons of the year in which they should be attacked, all the people in their neighborhood, such as the Bourdjans [Pechenegues], Avars, Bulgars, Slavs, Khazars and others.

Moslim must have completed his knowledge of Byzantium during the period of his imprisonment and this shows how much information the prisoners could collect. Mas'udi (p. 262) mentions also some other exchanges of which he had no special knowledge, one under the Caliph Al-Mahdi (775–785), one under Harun Al-Rashid in 797, another in 816, in 861 under Al-Mutawakkil, and in 871 under the Caliph Al-Mu'tamid.

Some exchanges of prisoners are also mentioned by other Arabic writers. M. Canard translated the passages concerning the relations between Byzantium and the Arabs in the appendices to his edition of Vasiliev's *Byzance et les Arabes* (tome 1, 2). His translations from Tabari's *Arabic Chronicle* (tome I, 2, pp. 278–328) are most welcome, as only parts of Tabari's work are accessible in translation (the exchange of prisoners in 845, pp. 311–315).

Mas'udi tells us in volume 8 (pp. 75–88) of his *Meadows of Gold* (translated into French by de Maynard and de Courteille) an interesting story said to have taken place in the reign of Muawiya. Some

Muslim war prisoners were brought to Constantinople and presented to the emperor; one of the officials of patrician rank slapped a prisoner who seems to have been a scion of a prominent Arab tribe. The prisoner protested and complained that Muawiya was a bad ruler if such an insult could be inflicted on a Muslim without being avenged. Released after an exchange of prisoners, he returned to Baghdad and saw the caliph, who had already been informed by other freed prisoners of the incident. Muawiya reproached the man for his complaint of the caliph's impotence in not preventing such an insult to a Muslim, and promised to avenge it. He therefore hired a merchant from Tyre and asked him to befriend the patrician during his next visit to Constantinople and to bring him by a ruse to Tyre and Baghdad. The ruse succeeded and the patrician was brought into the presence of the caliph, who called for the Muslim insulted by the patrician, and asked him to inflict on the Greek exactly the same maltreatment as the Greek had inflicted on him. It was done, and the released Muslim warrior kissed the feet and hand of the caliph, thanking him that he had avenged the insult inflicted on a Muslim. After that the caliph treated the patrician with respect and sent him back to Constantinople with many presents for the emperor, who thanked the caliph for his magnanimous treatment of the patrician. After that, during the reign of Muawiya, no other Muslim prisoner was maltreated.

This is one of the anecdotes which the Arab writers liked to add to their historical accounts, but it reveals several facts which seem to be important. First, Mas'udi's tale reveals that commercial relations between the Arab Empire and Constantinople existed in the tenth century, and illustrates, at the same time, how easy it was for the Arabs to penetrate by this means into the capital whence the merchants could bring important intelligence to the caliphs. The incident mentioned by Mas'udi could have happened. The Arab prisoners, when brought to the capital, were first collected in the Hippodrome, as is reported by Constantine VII in his *Book of Ceremonies*, II, chs. 19, 20, pp. 607–615, in describing the ceremonies to be observed when a victory was celebrated by an emperor; being exposed to the excited populace, the prisoners may well have been insulted and humiliated.

From the same passage we can conclude that the Arab prisoners were generally put in the Praetorian prison near the office of the *Eparch* of the city. The emperor himself used to visit this prison and, if this is so, he certainly did not omit to see the Arab officers also. Nicetas Choniates (p. 731) speaks about another place called Mitaton where Muslim merchants were gathered. There was a mosque where the prisoners could worship, which was near the church of Hagia Irene.

It is interesting to read what al-Makrizi, writing in 985, said about the dwelling for noble Arab prisoners in Constantinople: "When Maslama ibn Abdal-malik invaded the country of the Romans and penetrated into their territory he stipulated that the Byzantine dog should erect near his own palace in the Hippodrome a special building for Muslim notables and noblemen when they are taken prisoner." P. K. Hitti, in his *History of the Arabs* (p. 204), when quoting al-Makrizi, adds that this building, al-Balat, is referred to by Jaqut as being in use between 944 and 967. The Arabic writer of the tenth century, al-Mukaddasi, also speaks of this place.

Another story concerning the treatment of Arab prisoners in Constantinople is related by the Arab writer al-Tanuhi (949–994), translated by Canard in the collection of Arabic texts bearing on Byzantine history of the late ninth and tenth centuries (*Byzance et les Arabes*, tome II, pp. 286 ff.). Al-Tanuhi recounts that Ali ibn Isa, the famous vizir of the Caliph Al-Muqtadir, complained to his friend that he had been informed how badly Arab prisoners were treated upon the accession of "two young emperors," although until then they had been treated with kindness and consideration. Now they were deprived of food and clothing, tortured, and forced to accept the Christian faith. He asked his friend how he could improve their lot, short of war, and was advised that an embassy should be sent to Constantinople representing the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, to remonstrate with the emperors. If the maltreatment of the prisoners did not cease, reprisals would have to be taken against the Christian subjects of the caliph. The patriarchs wrote a letter declaring that such maltreatment of prisoners was un-Christian and threatened excommunication if it continued. Their envoys, accompanied by a Saracen, reached Constantinople and, after a delay, were admitted to the imperial presence. The emperor denied the report of maltreatment and asked them to go to the Praetorium jail to see how the Arabs were treated. The envoys found them in good health, well clothed and well fed, but saw that their clothes were new and that their faces showed signs of past suffering. The prisoners asked them whom they had to thank for the amelioration of their state. The Arab envoys said that the intervention of the vizir Ali ibn Isa had brought about this change.

In examining the report of the Arab writer, R. J. H. Jenkins, in his paper on "The Emperor Alexander and the Saracen Prisoners," came to the conclusion that it was based on truth. The "young emperors" were Alexander, who succeeded his brother Leo VI in 912, and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, who was only eight years old. Alexander, who reigned only thirteen months, was also responsible for the maltreatment of a Bulgarian embassy which had provoked Symeon of Bulgaria to declare war on Byzantium. He also changed the friendly attitude of his late brother towards the Arab prisoners.

The Byzantine answer to this intervention of the vizir in favor of the Arab prisoners is contained in a letter of Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus who was a member of the regency during the minority of Constantine VII. In this letter (*PG*, letter 102) the patriarch rejects the accusations concerning the treatment of the prisoners, affirming that they have always been treated with philanthropy and given everything they needed for their comfort. They were not forced to become Christians, but had free access to the mosque which was kept with the same care as the mosques in Saracen territory. Asking the vizir to stop any persecution of Christians, the patriarch sent a few Arab prisoners with his embassy who would testify that their comrades were well treated.

The existence of a mosque for the Muslims in Constantinople in the tenth century is thus confirmed by the report of Porphyrogenitus and by the letter of Nicholas Mysticus. Its foundation on the initiative of Maslama, although mentioned by Porphyrogenitus, is doubtful. It seems to have been constructed by the Byzantine government at a much earlier date for Arab prisoners, exiles, merchants, and visitors, in order to give them the opportunity to worship according to their customs and to show good will to the caliphs. Arab sources speak about this mosque in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It seems to have been several times destroyed and rebuilt, notably in 1049 by Constantine Monomach. Nicetas Choniates (p. 696), when speaking about a revolt during the reign of Alexis Angelos, mentions also that the mosque was destroyed by the rebels (1201).

Another mosque was constructed, according to Arab sources, by Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195). This was the mosque near the church of Hagia Irene, noted above. This mosque was pillaged and burned, according to Nicetas Choniates (p. 731) in 1203 by the Pisans and Venetians. It was defended by the Muslims residing in the district Mitaton, this time aided by the Greeks. Al-Makrizi, in his history of the Mamluk sultans (transl. by E. M. Quatremère, p. 117), speaks of a third mosque constructed by Michael VIII

Paleologus. Sultan Baybars is said to have sent precious objects to the emperor for the decoration of the mosque.

After his return to Syria, one of the Arab prisoners in Byzantium enriched Arabic literature with an interesting description of Constantinople, of the ceremonial banquets offered by the emperor, and of the emperor's procession to the Great Church. It is Harun-Ibn-Yahya, who was captured by the Byzantines during one of the many Arab invasions of Asia Minor, probably during the reign of Basil II. He was brought by sea with other prisoners from Ascalon to Attalia; from there the prisoners were carried on mail-horses for three days to Nicaea, and in another three days to the river Sangarius. They then marched in two days to a port whence they reached Constantinople. The Arabic text is not exact. Vasiliev thought that Nigiya should be Iconium. This is impossible. There may be mistakes in counting days and how long the journey took, but Nigiya can only be Nicaea, an important junction on the military road. This passage shows that from Attalia a post road went to Nicaea.

It is evident from this account of Harun-Ibn-Yahya that he had enjoyed free access to all the famous places in the city. He may have been a Christian subject of the caliph, or an Arab convert. His description of the city is picturesqe and quite accurate. He describes the imperial palace with its gates, vestibules and treasures, the hippodrome, the column of Justinian, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, an aqueduct, the Golden Gate, and some of the monasteries.

He depicts also the ceremonial banquet at Christmas to which also the Muslim prisoners were invited. The guests were entertained by music on organ and cymbals; after the banquet each Muslim captive received two dinars and three dirhems. It is clear from this that Arab prisoners were well treated in Constantinople.

Following his description of Constantinople, Yahya describes how he travelled from Constantinople to Rome, through Salonica and Kitros; from there he travelled for almost one month through Slavic lands to the city of Balasio-Spalato. He visited Venice and Pavia, "the city of the Lombards." After that he gives a description of Rome and some geographical indications. From Rome Burgundy (Burgan) can be reached in three months, and from there in a month one arrives in the land of the Franks, and beyond France is Brittania ruled by seven kings. Harun-Ibn-Yahya, however, did not visit these lands, and what he says about them is from hearsay, and from what he had learned in Rome.

Fortunately, a contemporary of Harun-Ibn-Yahya, the Arabo-

Persian writer Ibn Rosteh (Rosta) copied his description and itinerary into his geographical *Book of Precious Things*, and his text was published in De Goeje's *Bibliotheca* of Arabic Geographers, vol. VII.

Another suitable means of obtaining information on Byzantine affairs was provided by embassies sent to Constantinople, or received from there at the courts of the caliphs. It became diplomatic usage to exchange embassies on the occasion of the enthronement of a new emperor or a new caliph. The envoys would bring with them letters of good wishes and congratulations and rich presents to the new rulers. Embassies were also sent, as previously mentioned, to arrange for the exchange of prisoners. The Byzantines chose their ambassadors carefully, many of them being related to the ruling families, and all occupying high positions at court.

According to the historian and geographer al-Mas'udi (died 956), the first embassy was sent to Byzantium by the Caliph Omar. Al-Mas'udi's report on this embassy in his *Meadows of Gold*, translated into French (vol. 8, pp. 422–424), deserves to be quoted:

> Omar sent an embassy to the King of Byzantium with the aim of arranging certain affairs and to claim some rights for the Musulmans. The king received the envoys, assisted by his interpreter, sitting on his throne with the crown on his head, having on his right and left side patricians and faced by men ranged according to the ranks of their offices. After the envoys had explained the goal of their mission, he received them graciously and he addressed them in most courteous terms. After that they retired. The next day, early in the morning, a messenger asked them to appear before the emperor. When they had entered the palace they found the emperor at the feet of the throne, his head bare of the crown, with a visage all different from that they had seen the day before, as if a great misfortune had befallen him. The emperor asked them if they knew why he had requested them to see him, and, after they had expressed their ignorance, he announced to them: "I have just received at this moment a letter from my general commanding the border on the Arabic side. He announces to me that the King of the Arabs, that virtuous man, has died." After hearing these words, they could not restrain their tears. "Why are you weeping," asked the Emperor, "because of your fate, because of your religion, or because of your King?" "We are lamenting because of all this," said the envoys. "Do not lament for him, although you can be desolate for yourself. As concerns him, he departed for a world which is better than that he has left. . . . I was well informed about his private life and his public activities, and I found that he was constantly and faithfully fulfilling his duties to his Lord."

Al-Mas'udi may have exaggerated to some extent the eulogy of the emperor on the dead caliph, but the story has its historical basis. Omar was venerated by the Arabs for his piety, and his simple private life could have been known at the Byzantine court; there is no reason why a Christian emperor could not pay respectful homage to the memory of his dead antagonist. The emperor in question could only have been Constans II (641–668), and the date of the first known Arab embassy to Constantinople was the year of Omar's death, 644. It should also be noted that *cursus publicus* and the imperial intelligence service must have worked well in the seventh century, because the emperor received such speedy intelligence of the death of the caliph when the envoys sent by the Arab ruler were still in Constantinople.

Quite interesting stories are connected with some of those embassies. It is said, for example, that an envoy of Constantine V sent to Mansur, who was building the city of Baghdad, was responsible for laying out the town of Karkh, a suburb south of Baghdad, where all commercial and industrial activity was concentrated. The envoy is said to have first admired the splendid buildings shown to him, but to have remarked that the caliph's enemies could be within the middle of the city. Asked what he meant by this remark, he explained that it was unwise to have the market place inside the city because foreign merchants, admitted inside the walls, could have opportunities of acting as spies and traitors. Mansur understood, and removed the market place to the suburb. This story is related by the best Arabic historian, Tabari, who died in 923, and it has been copied by many later authorities.

Another story is connected with the embassy sent by the Emperor Constantine V in 775, to congratulate the Caliph Al-Mahdi on his accession to the throne. The name of the ambassador is given by Arab sources as Tarath, who was himself fifth in descent from the Emperor Maruk. This could mean the fifth generation from the Emperor Maurice, who died in 602. This counting corresponds to the date of Mansur's reign. Tarath offered to construct a water mill on the Şarat canal for the caliph. The caliph accepted the offer and placed five hundred thousand dirhems at Tarath's disposal, the patrician assuring him that the yearly rents from the water mill would amount to such a sum. So it happened, and the grateful caliph ordered that the rents should be bestowed on the patrician; the money was sent yearly to Constantinople to the builder of the water mill.

This account written in 891 by Ya'kubi is often regarded as a pleasant invention, but it seems that it has its historical basis. Bury (*A History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, pp. 241 ff.) may be right in his interpretation. He sees in the patrician Tarath the name Tarasius, the future patriarch. Before his elevation to the patriarchate Tarasius had occupied a high position at court, and it would be in the diplomatic tradition of Byzantine protocol to send a high official with great knowledge as ambassador to the Caliph Al-Mahdi. He may have been accompanied by an imperial official who had good knowledge of engineering.

We have already mentioned the embassy of John the Grammarian in 829–830, and the other embassies from Theophilus to Al-Mamun in 831, 832, and 833 are mentioned by Arab historians. In 845, Theodora started negotiations for an exchange of prisoners, sending an embassy to Caliph Al-Mutawakkil with rich presents.

The exchange of prisoners mentioned by Arab and Byzantine sources in 866 must have been prepared also by an embassy, as was customary. This embassy had also to announce to the Arab court the change in the supreme government in Byzantium. Theoctistus, the *logothete* of Theodora, was assassinated on the twentieth of November, 855, by Michael's uncle Bardas and his conspirators. Theodora was forced to surrender control of the government and Michael III was proclaimed by the senate as independent ruler. According to diplomatic usage any change on the throne had to be announced to the Arab partner and vice versa. Michael III and Bardas were certainly anxious to inform Al-Mutawakkil of this change as early as possible. An embassy was composed and sent to Baghdad during the winter.

Among the patricians who formed the embassy was also the secretary of the imperial chancery, the future patriarch Photius. On this occasion, most probably, he must have formed a friendship with a prominent Arab because his disciple Nicholas Mysticus, in one of his letters, reminds his reader that his spiritual father Photius had entertained friendly relations with his father. It is a matter of controversy as to whom this letter had been sent. If it was addressed to the emir of Crete of whom Nicholas had requested the release of Christian prisoners brought by Leo of Tripoli from Thessalonika, which was ravaged by Leo in 904, and whom he had disembarked in Crete, then Photius's friend was probably the son of the conqueror of Crete, Shuyab ben Omar. If, however, this letter was addressed to the Caliph Al-Muqtafi (902–908), Photius must have been in friendly contact with his father, the Caliph Al-Mu'tadid (892–902) before the latter had become caliph. Both suppositions are possible, although we have no other evidence for either of them besides the mention of Photius in the letter of his disciple Nicholas. In any event, it is interesting to note that friendly relations between Arab and Greek intellectuals could have existed, and may have been initiated during an embassy.

A further Arab embassy was sent to Michael III in 860, again having as its purpose an exchange of prisoners. Tabari has given us an interesting and picturesque account of this embassy, translated by M. Canard (*Byzance et les Arabes*, tome I, 2, p. 321). The Byzantines first refused to admit the Arab ambassador Nasr-ibn-al-Azhar to the audience hall because he presented himself in a black dress and bearing his sword, dagger, and turban. The ambassador, offended, threatened to leave, but was called back by the emperor's uncle, Petronas, and admitted to the imperial presence. He had, however, to wait four months for a second audience. He must thus have enjoyed good opportunities for observation which could be of interest to Baghdad. He presented the message of the caliph together with the rich presents sent to the emperor. Michael was sitting on his throne, but did not pronounce one word during the whole audience. All conversation was carried on by Petronas, the emperor's uncle, through interpreters, the emperor manifesting his consent or refusal by nodding or shaking his head.

Nicholas Mysticus addressed another letter to the Caliph Al-Muqtadir (908–932) in which he asked the caliph to liberate the Christians of Cyprus who had been carried off into slavery by Damian of Tarsus during his raid on Cyprus in 912. Cyprus, since 688, had been neutral territory bound to take neither side in any conflict between the Byzantines and the Arabs, and to pay taxes in equal shares to Byzantium and the Muslims. The Byzantines regarded this raid as a violation of the treaty of 688. In the *Life of St. Demetrianos*, the Bishop of Chytri in Cyprus, published by H. Grégoire, it is said that the saint had reached Baghdad and had pleaded successfully for the release of the captives. It is hardly possible that the caliph would have released the captives only on the solicitation of one local bishop—as the hagiographer has it—without the support of any official action of protest by the Byzantine government. Demetrianos was certainly accompanied by some other important personalities, and the mission was followed up by a written remonstrance from the Patriarch Nicholas, who was at that time head of the council of regency for the child Emperor Constantine

VII. The letter most probably reached Baghdad when Demetrianos, together with Cypriot nobles, was at the residence of the caliph, and he may have delivered it in person.

Letter no. 1 contains some interesting statements revealing how the two great powers regarded each other. The patriarch begins his letter with the affirmation that all power on earth is from God. Therefore, all who exercise it are united in a spiritual brotherhood, and should be in constant and friendly intercourse with one another.

> If this is true of minor rulers, how much more should it be true for those who exercise the greatest authority, who dispose of much greater power, who are adorned with far greater honors. . . . What does this mean for us? It means that there are two empires which together dominate the earth, that of the Saracens and that of the Romans, which scintillate like two immense stars in the celestial firmament. Because of this alone we should entertain relations of community and brotherhood and we should avoid hostility to each other under the pretext that we differ in our kind of life, in our customs, and in our religion.

This is a definition of a new political theory which deserves our attention. Anyhow, in this case, the words of the Patriarchal Regent found a favorable echo in the Arab capital and Bishop Demetrianos was allowed to bring the members of his flock back to Cyprus in the autumn of 913. This letter is translated by M. Canard in V. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* (tome II, 1, pp. 403 ff.)

Another remarkable Byzantine envoy to Baghdad was Leo Choerosphactes who was charged in 905 by Leo VI to negotiate an exchange of prisoners. His first mission succeeded, but the Byzantines saw themselves forced to stop the exchange because of the revolt of Ducas, and the ambassador had to return to Constantinople. It appears that during the winter of 905–906 the vizir addressed a letter to Choerosphactes reproaching him for the interruption of the exchange and criticizing many articles of the Christian Creed. Leo answered the letter by a missive in which he defended the Christian doctrines criticized by the vizir and himself found fault with some beliefs of the Muslim religion. This letter is preserved among writings attributed to Arethas of Caesarea and is dated by some scholars between 918 and 923. M. Canard, who published the translation of the letters of the Patriarch Nicholas in the appendix to his *Byzance et les Arabes* (tome II, 1, pp. 399 ff.), also gives a résumé of Arethas's letter and of the different opinions concerning its authorship and dates. It seems that we should regard Leo as the author. He may have written the letter in Constantinople before his second mission in the spring of 906, during which the agreement to continue the exchange of prisoners was concluded, and not after his return from the second embassy.

Let us put aside the controversy as to the authorship of this letter and let us stress one thing, namely, that during the stay of Byzantine envoys in Baghdad religious disputations often took place. This is shown by this letter which is a kind of religious polemical pamphlet. But we have another example of this kind. The *Old Slavonic Life of St. Constantine-Cyril* contains an account of a religious discussion Constantine held with Arab theologians. He is said to have been twenty-four years old when he was sent on an embassy to Al-Mutawakkil. I have shown that such an embassy could really have taken place in 851, that it was led by a patrician named George, and the goal of the embassy was to ask for a prolongation of the armistice, which was, however, not granted by the caliph.

Let us recall in this connection the report on an embassy sent by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in 957–58 to the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muizz proposing a perpetual truce between the Caliph of Ifrigiya and Byzantium. The answer given by the caliph to the ambassador contains several quotations from the Koran forbidding a perpetual peace with the unbelievers. The caliph refused to send an embassy to the emperor because "he was not in need of him, neither was he in any way obliged to him. . . . It would be, of course, quite a different thing if we had to correspond with him in a matter touching religion. Now, although such a correspondence is permitted to him by his religion, we think he [the emperor] would dislike it. If we knew that he would accede to our demand if we sent an envoy in that matter, we would find it possible to send an ambassador as he [the emperor], and you [the envoy] have asked. We would not do that, were it not for the sake of Almighty God and His religion. . . ." The editor of this document, S. M. Stern, remarks that the last sentence is not clear. It may mean that the caliph invited the emperor to accept Islam or, perhaps—this seems more probable—to take an active part in the religious disputation conducted by letters.

This discussion was written by a contemporary Arab writer called al-Nu'man. This information should be completed by that given by an author of the fifteenth century, Imad al-din-Idris. He mentions the Byzantine embassy to Al-Muizz, and gives information about the curious attempts of Al-Muizz to convert the emperor. He says, "The Commander of the Faithful Al-Muizz composed a book and sent it to him [the emperor]. It contains examples of the errors of the Christians and proves the prophesy of Muhammad which they deny. . . . This book, composed by the Commander of the Faithful Al-Muizz for the ruler of the Byzantines, is well known and is still in existence." The editor, S. M. Stern, has found at least some traces of this book composed by Al-Muizz in an Arabic manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

All this is instructive and shows that the presence of Byzantine ambassadors at Arab courts very often led to discussions on religious matters. This indicates that among the members of the Byzantine embassies there must also have been some attachés well versed in theology, such as Constantine-Cyril—called the Philosopher.

Such was most probably also the function of the future Patriarch Photius, who participated in the embassy sent by Michael III in 855 to the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil. The embassy was sent in order to announce the change on the Byzantine throne and to conduct the negotiations for a new exchange of prisoners which took place in 856 on the river Lamos, as has been said before.

As we have seen from the advice given by Harun Al-Rashid, the Byzantine envoys were well treated, but also kept under close surveillance during their stay at the residence of the caliphs. In this respect, the Arabs imitated strictly the precautions taken on such occasions by the Byzantines. The reception of the ambassadors was surrounded with the utmost imaginable splendor and magnificence, imitating and perhaps surpassing the splendid ceremonial observed by the Byzantines on such occasions. The historian of Baghdad, al-Katib (1059), described in detail the reception of the patricians John Radimus and Michael Toxaras, sent by the Empress Zoë in 917 to the Caliph Al-Muqtadir in Baghdad. It was translated into English by G. Le Strange, and a French summary is given by M. Canard (*Byzance et les Arabes*, tome II, 1, pp. 239–243).

The envoys were greeted first by the caliph's noblemen in the city of Tekrit on the Tigris, where they were the caliph's guests for two months, resting after their journey. On their arrival at Baghdad they were lodged in a residence prepared for them in the upper part of East Baghdad. For their reception the residence of the caliph was decorated with magnificent tapestries and luxurious furniture. The envoys were brought in state by the Great Road to the Public Gate of the palace precincts, troops in full parade order in a double line flanking the road for the whole of this distance. The envoys were taken first to the palace known as the Riding House, built with porticoes of marble columns. On the right of this palace stood five hundred mares with saddles of gold and silver, on the left five hundred mares with brocade saddle-cloths and long headcovers. Each horse was held by a groom in splendid uniform. After passing through various corridors and halls, decorated for the occasion, they were introduced into the Park of the Wild Beasts with separate housing for various kinds of wild animals, the beasts coming close to the visitors and eating from their hands. Four elephants were caparisoned in peacock silk brocade. In another palace were a hundred lions, fifty on each side with their keepers, as the envoys passed through. Other tamed wild animals were all brought out for the inspection of the ambassadors.

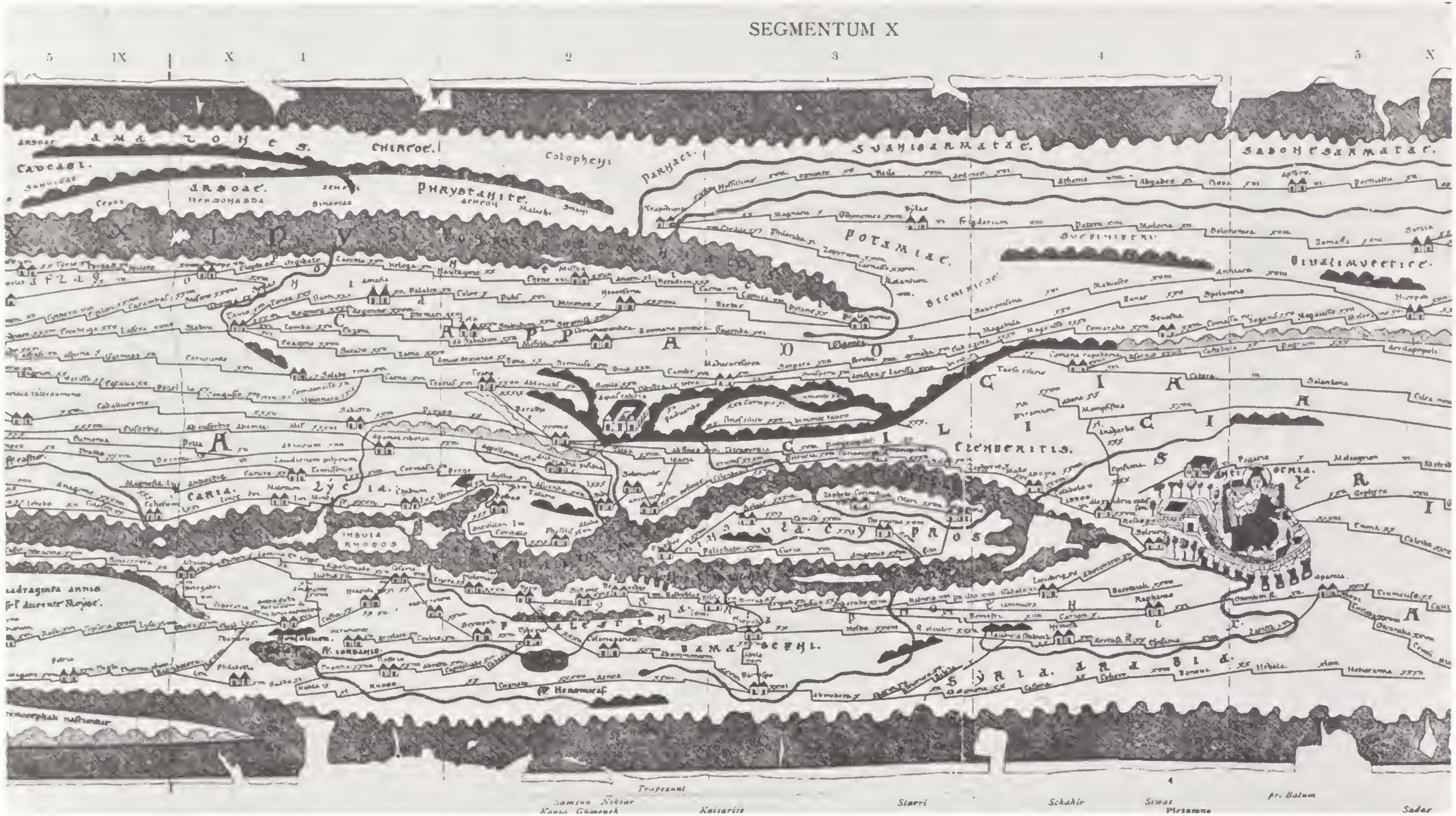
After that they were guided to the Palace of the Tree. In its middle stood a tree made of silver surrounded by a great tank with clear water. The tree had eighteen branches with numerous twigs. On them sat various kinds of mechanical birds of gold and silver. The branches of the tree were of silver and gold, carrying leaves of diverse colors. The leaves moved as the wind blew, and the birds piped and sang. It is evident that the caliphs were inspired by Byzantine examples and tried to surpass them.

> After that the ambassadors were brought to the Palace of Paradise richly decorated. On the halls of the palace were hanging ten thousand gilded breast-plates. In the long, neighboring corridors were ranged on stands ten thousand other pieces of armor and arms. Two thousand eunuchs, both white and black, were standing in the corridor. After that they inspected the *corps d'élite* of the pages and guards. On this long tour of inspection they had to rest and were served with iced beverages and beer. At last they reached the Palace of the Crown on the bank of the Tigris, where they were received by the caliph sitting on the throne wearing a magnificent vestment embroidered with gold. His five sons and the vizir stood near him. After kissing the floor as a sign of respect for the caliph the envoys were presented by the vizir to Muqtadir, to whom they explained through interpreters the goal of their embassy, which was the exchange of prisoners. The audience lasted one hour. The caliph presented to them a sealed letter addressed to the emperor announcing his granting of the envoys' requests. The latter kissed the letter respectively and were conducted through the private gate to the Tigris where they embarked in a decorated boat which brought them to their residence. The caliph sent to each of them fifty purses each containing five thousand dirhems.

This was perhaps the most splendid reception of a Byzantine embassy in Baghdad. We can see that the Arabs followed the same policy on such occasions as did the Byzantines. The exhibition of the treasures in the palace which dazzled the envoys was intended to show them how inexhaustible were the riches of the Arabic Empire; the many servants, eunuchs, and courtiers surrounding the caliph in splendid uniforms stressed the unique and majestic position of the ruler of the faithful; the parade of escorting soldiers and the admission to the arsenal was meant to manifest to them the military might of the Muslim world.

One can ask to what extent this information collected by the different sources of intelligence was accessible to the Arabic intellectuals and how this knowledge was reflected in Arabic literature. When studying the reorganization of the Byzantine Empire into *themata*, the specialists have to complete the information given by Byzantine authors with the writings of some Arabic authors. Most of this information is given by some Arabic geographers. We have already mentioned Ibn Khordadhbeh of Persian descent, who died about 912, and who was director of the post. In his *Book on Roads and Provinces*, he gives not only a detailed account of the highways and posting stations of the Arabic Empire, but also a description of Byzantine provinces and their organization, of their officials with different salaries, and of the Byzantine army. The main source for his information was the Muslim whom al-Mas'udi has mentioned describing the exchange of prisoners in 845. A similar description of the Byzantine Empire is given by the geographer Kudama Ibn Ja'far (Kodama), who died in 922. Ya'kubi, who lived in the second half of the ninth century, wrote a *Book of Countries* in which he described mostly the great Arabic cities with topographical and economic details. He is said to have also written a *Book on the Romans* which unfortunately has been lost.

Al-Mas'udi, who had journeyed through almost all the countries of Asia and even visited Zanzibar, compiled a thirty-volume work of encyclopaedic and historico-geographical character, of which only an epitome, *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, is preserved. He did not limit himself to typically Muslim subjects, but gave interesting accounts of some Indo-Persian subjects and of Roman and Jewish history. He also gives much information on Byzantium, its history, emperors, provinces, and even on its army, on the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, which he calls the Khazar Sea. Much of this information is preserved also in a brief index with additions to his former works, published under the title *The Book of Indications and Revision*. The Arabs are the initiators of mediaeval geography. In this respect they superseded the Romans and Byzantines. Of course, Arabic geographers were interested first in the description of their own countries, but many of them ventured very far from their homeland and described the experiences of their travels or of the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The *cursus publicus* in eastern Asia Minor and Syria, as depicted in Segment X of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a 12th-century copy of an original Roman Imperial map (K. Miller, *Die Peutingersche Tafel oder Weltkarte des Cassorius*).

travels of others in their geographical works. They got their inspiration from Ptolemy. The Caliph Al-Mamun caused an Arab version of Ptolemy's great astronomical work to be published about 815, and the geography of Ptolemy was also known and often quoted by Arab writers. Muslim traders returning from distant lands and alien peoples aroused interest; an anonymous author described in 851 the account of the journeys of Sulaiman into the Far East, giving the first Arabic description of China and the coastlands of India. From this and other narratives evolved the famous and popular stories of Sinbad the Sailor.

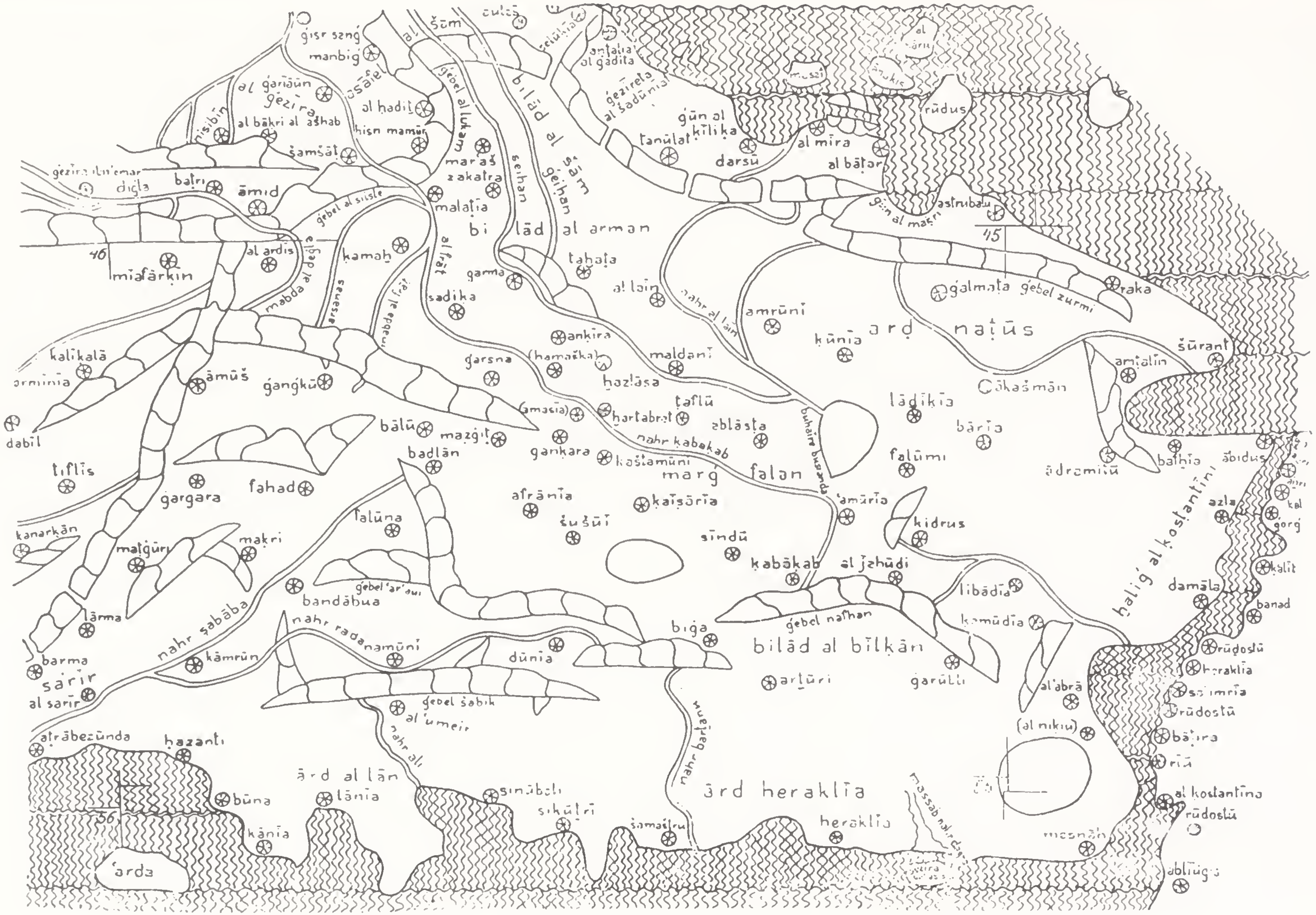
Many of the reports preserved by Arabic geographers are important sources for the history of eastern peoples. For example, the earliest reliable account of Russia is that of Ibn Fadlan. He was sent in 921 by the Caliph Al-Muqtadir as ambassador to the Volga Bulgars. Fortunately, most of his report is reproduced in Ibn Yakut's monumental *Geographical Dictionary*. Al-Jakubi has also preserved important accounts on the Slavic peoples. Al-Mas'udi also speaks of Muslim traders among al-Dir, Slavic tribes probably living near the Pripet. The Spanish Jew Ibn Ja'qub gave an account of his embassy from the Spanish Muslim court to the Emperor Otto the Great.

Other geographers of the ninth and tenth centuries are Al-Balkhi, ca. 850, whose work consists chiefly of regional maps; Al-Istakhri's *Book of Roads and Provinces* was revised by Ibn Haukal (ca. 977). Al-Makdisi's work shows more originality. Al-Bakri, a western Muslim geographer, wrote *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* (about 1050), which has survived. Many works of earlier geographers are preserved in Ibn Yakut's *Geographical Dictionary* (ca. 1225).

Of special interest is the geographer al-Idrisi. Born in Ceuta in 1099, he travelled widely in Europe, Africa, and the Levant before he became royal geographer to Roger II, the Norman King of Sicily.

In 1154, he wrote at Roger's court a geographical treatise with the curious title *The Pleasure of the Ardent Enquirer*, also called *The Book of Roger*. He preserved much important information for the history of southern Italy and other lands, such as Spain, Africa, Finland, Poland, and others. Among them is the report of Sallam, leader of the expedition sent by the caliph about the middle of the ninth century by land to the Chinese Wall.

This short sketch of Arab exploration of neighboring and even far distant lands shows to what extent the Arabs, in this respect, differed from the Romans and the Byzantines. Most of the intelligence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gezira
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al hadit
gebel al lukam
seihan
geihan
maraš
zakatra
malaṭia
gezira ibn 'omar
diğla
batrı
āmid
gebel al sisle
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kamah
al frāt
mabda al değla
mabda al frāt
arsanas
miafārkin
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bilād al arman
ṭabaṭa
garma
sadika
al lain
nahr al lain
antalia al gadita
gezirat al šadūnia
gūn al kilika
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darsū
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al bāṭar
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bāria
falūmi
ādramiū
bathia
ābidus
kalikalā
arminia
dabil
āmūš
gangkū
garsna
(hamaška)
ankira
maldanī
hazlāsa
taflū
ablāsta
hartabrat
(amasia)
bālū
mazgit
ganhara
kaštamūni
nahr kabakab
buhaire busanda
marğ
falan
badlān
tiflis
fahad
gargara
afrānia
šušūi
kaiṣāria
'amūria
kidrus
sindū
kabākab
al jzhūdi
kanarkān
malgūri
makri
talūna
bandābua
gebel 'ar'aui
lāma
barma
sarir
al sarir
nahr sababa
kāmrūn
nahr rada
namūni
dūnia
biğa
gebel nathan
bilād al bilkān
arṭūri
garūlı
libādia
kamūdia
al 'abrā
(al nikiu)
gebel šabik
al 'umeir
nahr ali
nahr barṭanu
ard al lān
lānia
ard heraklia
heraklia
atrābezūnda
hazantı
būna
kānia
sinūbeli
sikūtri
simaišru
massab nahr
mosnāh
'arda
halig al kostantini
azla
kal
gorğ
kalit
damāla
banad
rūdostū
heraklia
saimria
rūdostū
bāṭıra
riā
al kostantino
rūdostū
abliūgs
56

Asia Minor as shown in the Arab map of al-Idrisi. Note that the Black Sea is at the bottom, and the Mediterranean Sea at the top (*Mappae Arabicae*).

contained in these and similar writings had little military importance, but was of great interest in the economic and commercial expansion of the Arab world.

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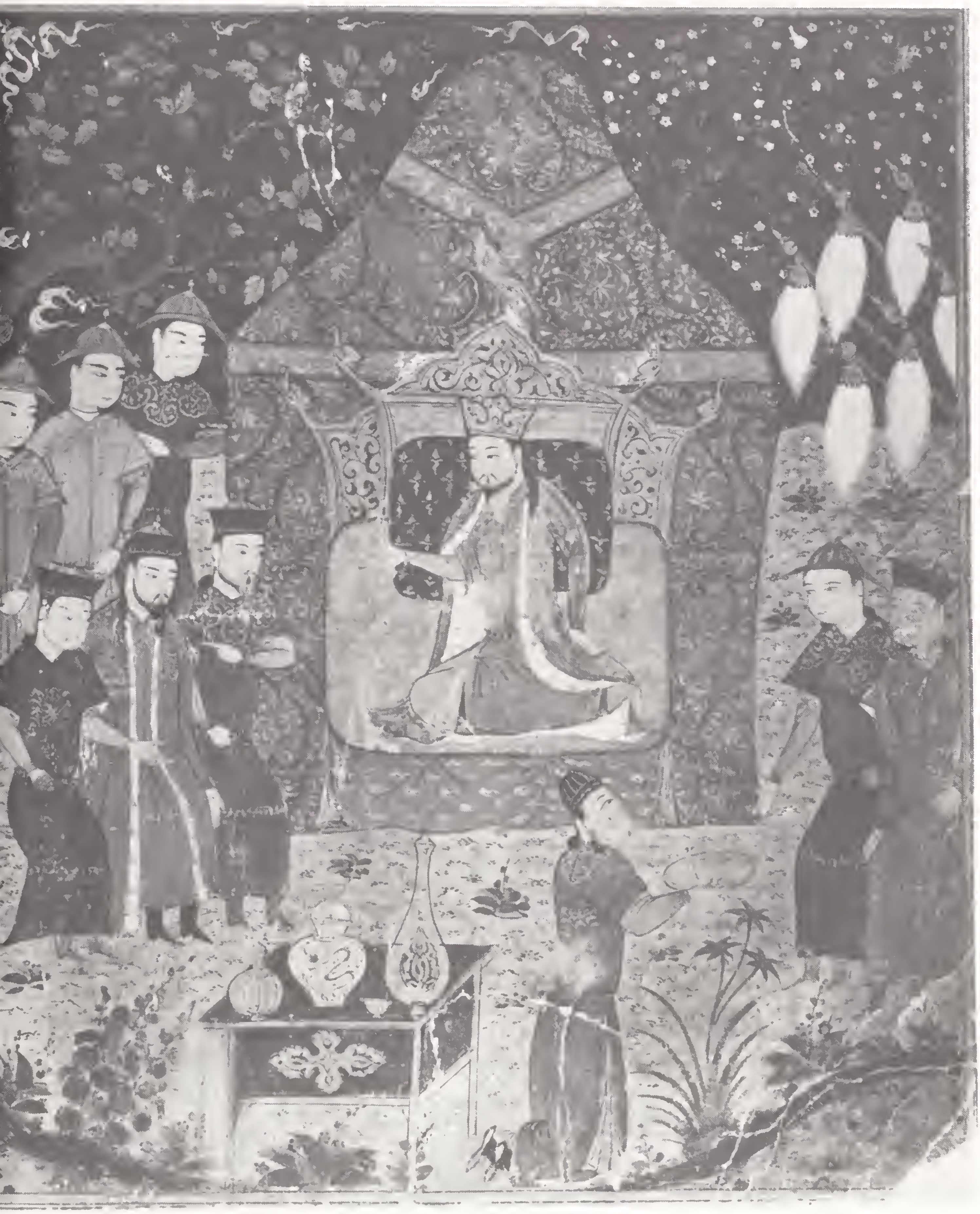
V

Intelligence in the Mongol Empire

The Rise of Jenghiz Khan (a New David?), Military Genius, Author of the *Great Yasaq,* Mongol Law Code—Conquest of North China, Manchuria, and Kara-Khitai—Jenghiz Khan, Muhammad II, Caliph Nasin—Conquest of Muhammad Khwarizmian Empire—Expedition of Jebe and Sübötäi in Caucasus and Russia—Jenghiz's Organization of Intelligence, His Post Service—Chinese Post—Arabs on Chinese Intelligence—New Mongol Conquest in Europe, Asia, and China—Jenghiz's Successors and the Post Service—Western Information on the Mongol Post, de Piano Carpini, Longjumeau, Rubruck—Marco Polo on the Mongol Chinese Post Service—Report by Oderic and the Arab Batuta on the Mongol Post—Organization of the Mongol-Chinese Post Service.

The geographical discoveries of the Arabs remained unknown to the west, which had an extremely vague knowledge of the lands beyond the Caucasus and in the Far East. This is illustrated by their belief that there existed in those regions a huge kingdom ruled by Prester John, a holy and righteous man whose power was immense and who would help the Christians in their war with the Saracens. During the Second Crusade (1147–1149) rumors that Prester John had already attacked the Saracens spread among the Crusaders and in Europe. The disastrous end of the Crusade showed that such hopes were vain and the belief in Prester John faded.

Another legendary account stirred Europe about 1221 when the Crusaders, after conquering Damietta in Egypt, were beleaguered in the conquered city by the Sultans of Egypt and Damascus. The report was spread by Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Ptolemais, who wrote to the Pope, to the University of Paris, the Duke of Austria,



The enthronement of Jenghiz Khan (MS Suppl. Persan 1113, fol. 44v). Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

and to Henry III of England that a new hope had arisen for the Christians. A new and mighty ruler, David of India, was about to invade the lands of the unbelievers with an army of unparalleled size, to help the Christians.

Actually, a mighty ruler was arising in the Far East, building an immense new empire. But it was not a new David. It was Temujin, the peerless son of Yesugei, *baghatur* (chieftain) of the Kiyats, a minor Mongol clan. He was born about 1167, in northern Outer Mongolia. The hardships he had suffered in his youth served to strengthen his native dynamic vigor, and he became a valiant young warrior who soon found a few faithful followers, and who displayed great courage and skill in the campaign against the Tatars and the tribes of Naimans and Märkits who had abducted his young bride. Thanks to his military valor and diplomatic talent, he succeeded in unifying the disorganized and impoverished Mongol tribes who were wasting their energy in mutual conflict. In 1206, at a solemn assembly of the nation (*quriltai*) Temujin Khan was proclaimed emperor and given the new name Jenghiz, which probably means strong, robust, or rightful ruler.

His first task was to strengthen the army. He chose the decimal system in military organization with units of ten, one hundred, and one thousand warriors. The ninety-five battalions of one thousand men, each commanded by his faithful followers, were completed by the imperial guard—the Bagaturs—ten thousand strong. His military genius forged the men of the nomadic tribes into a formidable, well-disciplined, and determined army ready for new conquests. Jenghiz did not join any religious group—although his people were under the influence of Shamanism—for his god was the "Eternal Blue Sky" which, he believed, had predestined him to become master of the whole world. Before any important decision he offered prayers and libations to the "Eternal Blue Sky," but he never permitted the Shamans to influence the political life of his nation. He was illiterate, but after defeating the Naimans in 1214 he quickly grasped the importance of literacy which the Naimans had derived from the Uigurs. The latter, a Turkic tribe, had settled in eastern Turkestan (modern Sinkiang) in the middle of the eighth century and had attained quite a high level of civilization. They had their own alphabet, based on that of the Sogdian which, in turn, derived from Aramaic letters. Jenghiz ordered the captured secretary of the Naiman khan to teach a few selected and intelligent young men who were in charge of the administration of the Mongol

Empire how to write. So it happened that the Uigur script and culture were adopted by the illiterate Mongols.

Jenghiz also gave to his people a new Mongol imperial legal code which is contained in the *Great Yasaq*, regarded by the Mongols as the product of the divinely inspired mind of the founder of their first dynasty. No complete copy of the *Great Yasaq* has been preserved, but its contents can be reconstructed from the works of several oriental medieval writers. It appears that it was based on the old Mongol and Turkic tribal traditions which were gradually thoroughly revised and transformed by Jenghiz and his advisers, and welded with a monarchical concept of the state. Besides some general precepts, it contained principles of international law, rules for the organization and discipline of the army, administrative maxims, criminal, civil, and commercial laws. The Persian historian Rashid al-Din and the Arab writer al-Makrizi date the promulgation of the *Yasaq* from the great *quriltai* of 1206. This first edition was supplemented by new ordinances proclaimed in 1210 and 1218. Probably at the session of the *quriltai* in 1218 the basic laws promulgated in 1206 and supplemented in 1210 were systematized and approved in written code. It seems, however, that the *Great Yasaq* was only finally revised and completed by Jenghiz about 1226.

After completing the reorganization of the Mongol army and the administration, reinforced by the submission of the clans of the forest people and the Uigurs, Jenghiz was ready for conquest. He attacked the kingdom of the Tanguts (Hsi-Hsia), a people of Tibetan origin. They agreed to pay tribute to the Mongols. He contented himself with this act of submission, because his main goal was the conquest of the northern part of China controlled by the Kin (Chin) dynasty, the Tatars who had wrested northern China from the Sung. The campaign against the Kin began in 1211. Jenghiz proved once more to be a skillful military leader. Dividing his army, he attacked in several places at the same time, and his guard penetrated the Great Wall at a point where the enemy did not expect an attack.

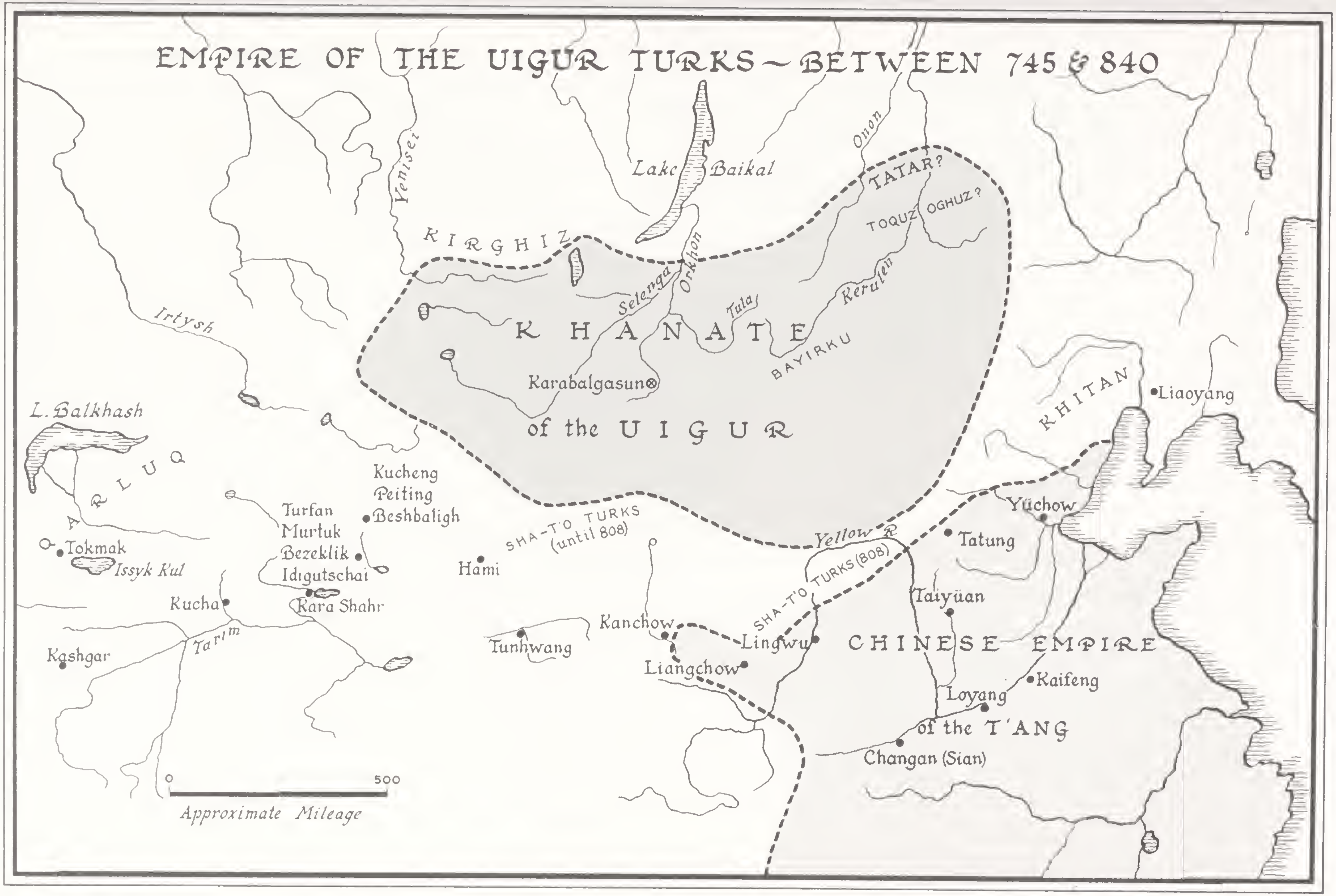
The Mongols occupied the region north of Peking, seizing the imperial herd of horses. The Khitans of southern Manchuria revolted and submitted to Jenghiz. In 1214 the Kin emperor signed a peace treaty which, however, did not last, and in 1215 Peking surrendered to the Mongols. North China and Manchuria became integral parts of Jenghiz's empire. Moreover, the Khan also had at his disposal a corps of Chinese army engineers and some well-trained Chinese civil servants. The Chinese engineers helped the Mongols build war machines for the conquest of fortified cities, an art which the Mongols did not hitherto possess. After conquering the Kin Empire, Jenghiz crushed the Kingdom of Kara-Khitai in Turkestan then ruled by Küchlüg, the son of the last Naiman khan previously defeated. Jenghiz's *noyan* (general) Jebe cleverly exploited the religious situation in the kingdom where Nestorian Christians and Muslims were persecuted by the Buddhist rulers. After proclaiming religious freedom, Jebe won over the population to the Mongol rule and was able to send the head of Küchlüg to Jenghiz Khan as a proof of his victory.

After China and Kara-Khitai came the conquest of another empire formed by Muhammad II, of Turkic origin, who, from his original possession of Khwarizm in the Amur delta, whence his father had expelled the Seljuk rulers, had gradually extended his sovereignty over Turkestan, Afghanistan, and Persia. Thus he formed an imposing Khwarizmian Empire over which he ruled as shah. In this way he gradually attained a dominant position in the whole eastern part of the Muslim world and dreamed of the deposition of the Caliph of Baghdad, whom he hoped to replace.

After learning of the Mongol successes in China, Muhammad sent an embassy to Jenghiz bearing his congratulations. But his main objective, however, was to obtain intelligence on the khan's forces. The embassy was well received, for Jenghiz Khan needed many Muslim products for the better equipment of his army. He was prepared to recognize the Khwarizmian shah as the ruler of the West while emphasizing that he was the ruler of the East. Jenghiz therefore sent an embassy to the shah composed of Muslim merchants, and a commercial contact was established intended to guarantee an unmolested caravan trade between the two empires.

But even the Caliph Nasir of Baghdad hoped that the great new ruler would save him from the danger which threatened him from the Shah Muhammad. He obtained his intelligence about Jenghiz Khan's success and power from Nestorian Christians whose communities were dispersed far and wide throughout Asia, and the rumor that the great ruler was a Christian must have originated in this community. Through the mediation of the Nestorian patriarch residing in Baghdad, the caliph sent an envoy to Jenghiz Khan. In order to pass through Muhammad's lands without being suspected, the messenger's head was shaved. With a red-hot instrument his credentials were branded into his scalp, and a blue pigment was rubbed into the burns. He was made to learn his message by

EMPIRE OF THE UIGUR TURKS – BETWEEN 745 & 840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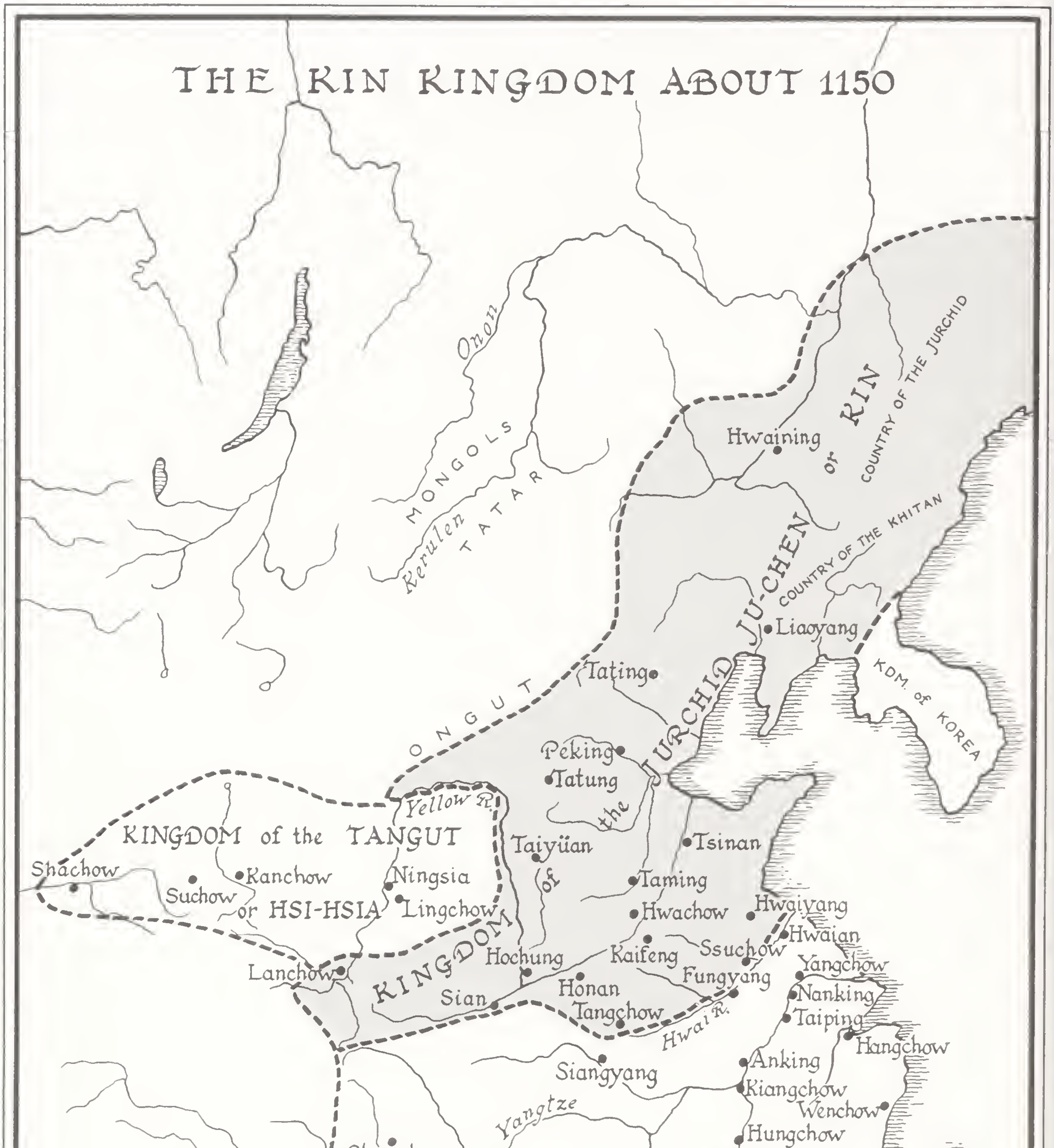

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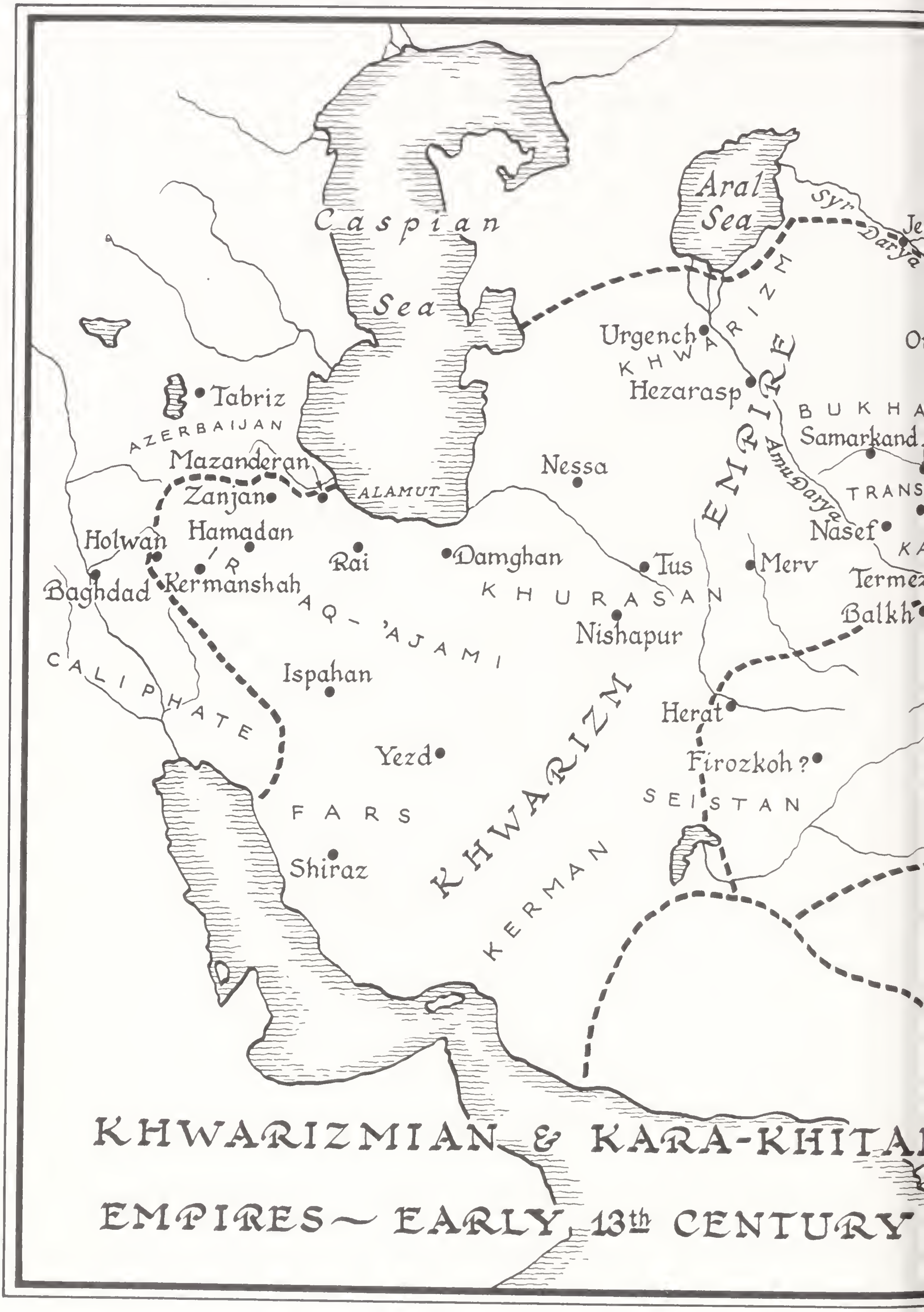
heart and was sent through Khwarizmian lands only after his hair had grown long enough to cover the brand. He reached Jenghiz's land, was caught by his guards and brought before the Khan. Jenghiz, who never lost an opportunity of obtaining additional intelligence on foreign peoples and lands, was pleased to learn from the envoy that Muhammad was not the uncontested ruler of the West, that he was not the head of the whole Muslim world, and that the Muslims were being invaded by white people from far-off lands—the Crusaders. But, although he had heard about the riches and beauties of Baghdad from the Muslim merchants, he was not interested in the caliph's troubles, believing that commercial relations with the shah would be more profitable to him.

In the meantime, however, the situation on the eastern frontier of the shah's empire had changed because of the unexpectedly rapid conquest of Kara-Khitai. This proved to be a shock to the shah, who began to concentrate his army in order to protect his country against possible threats from the victorious Jebe.

Upon reaching Samarkand after an unsuccessful campaign against the caliph, the shah received a message from the frontier fortress of Otrar informing him that the governor had captured a caravan of Muslim merchants coming from Jenghiz's lands and that there were without doubt Mongol spies among them. Forgetting the commercial agreement with the khan, the shah gave the order to put them all to death. All the members of the caravan were massacred, together with Jenghiz's personal envoy, and their belongings looted by the commander of Otrar. Only one man escaped, and he related what had happened to Jenghiz Khan, who threatened formidable vengeance, and began preparations for the conquest of the shah's empire after the latter had refused to extradite the governor who had perpetrated the massacre.

The famous war with the great Muslim Empire began in the autumn of 1219. This attack on Muslim lands by a powerful leader gave birth to that legendary rumor which had spread among the Christians that a new David had appeared in the East, and, because he had attacked the Muslims, he must be a Christian who would therefore help the Crusaders to conquer the Holy Land.

Jenghiz Khan made good use of all the information he had obtained about Muhammad and his empire from his own spies as well as from the Muslim merchants. He learned that the shah was an intolerant man, that, although a Muslim, he had started a war against the caliph, ravaging the lands of Muslims and Christians, which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Nessa
Holwan
Hamadan
Rai
Damghan
Tus
Merv
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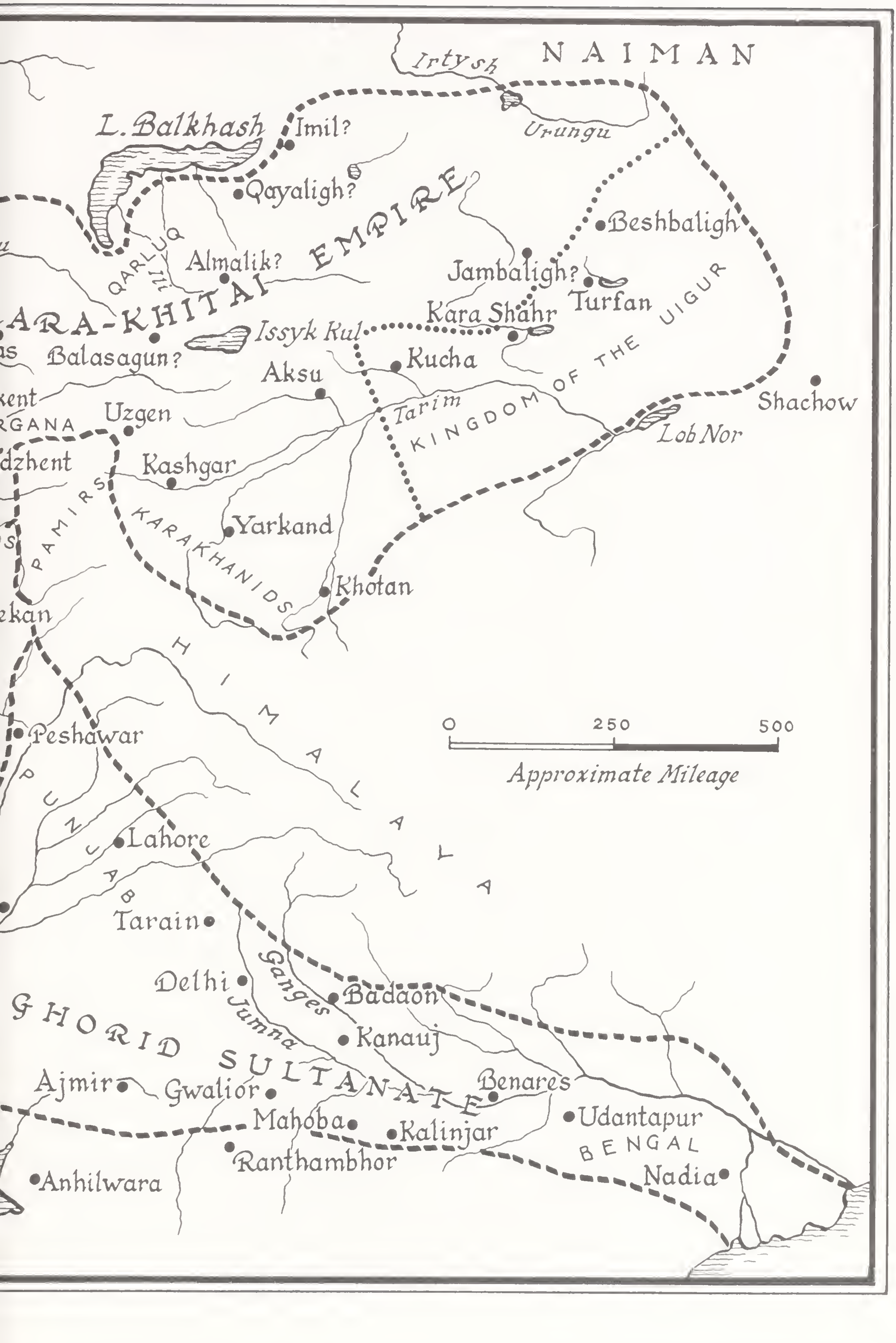
EMPIRES — EARLY 13th CENTURY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Issyk Kul
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KINGDOM OF THE UIGUR
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Benares
Udantapur
Mahoba
Kalinjar
BENGAL
Ranthambhor
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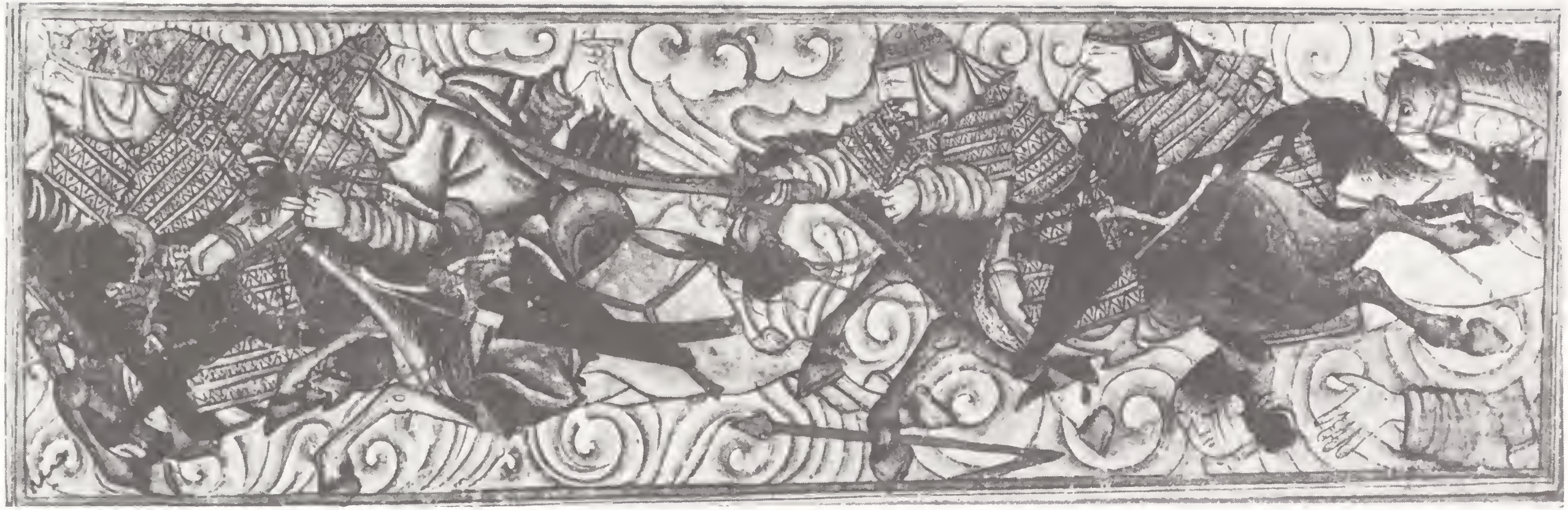
had aroused hostile feelings against him from among his own subjects. He invaded the shah's lands not only from the north by way of the Syr Darya, but also from the east. After crossing the Pamir passes during the winter into the valley of Fergana, Mongol fighters led by Jenghiz's son Jöchi used the same quick maneuvres they had employed before in China, the divisions being wholly dependent for their movements upon little banners and field insignia of various colors and shapes. This tactic helped them to attack, scatter, and reform for a new onslaught before the shah's men could comprehend the intention of the attackers. Jenghiz Khan's other army, led by another son, Tolui, advanced against Bokhara and Samarkand. Bokhara was seized and destroyed, the citadel Otrar stormed, and the governor who had massacred Jenghiz Khan's envoys was put to death under torture. Samarkand was taken and Jenghiz Khan sent two of his best officers, Jebe and Sübötäi, to pursue the shah, who had fled from Samarkand to the interior of his own country. However, the shah failed to organize any kind of resistance. He could not even kindle among the Muslims a religious feeling against the heathen attackers. It was generally known that the immediate cause of the invasion was the massacre of the Muslims who had been sent by Jenghiz Khan as ambassadors and merchants to the shah. The latter succeeded only in evading his pursuers. In the end, seeing that all hopes of escaping his pursuers were vain, he took refuge on a small island in the Caspian Sea, where he soon died on February 10, 1221.

The son of Muhammad, Jelaleddin, endeavored to reorganize that part of his father's empire which was still unconquered by the Mongols, but, in spite of his heroic attempts—he even won one victory over the Mongols—his lands were devastated in a war of annihilation. His courage saved him from death during the great battle with the Mongols on the Indus river. He found refuge in India, whence he returned after Jenghiz's death to Afghanistan and attacked Persia; but, pursued by the Mongols, he was forced to flee to the Kurdish mountains where he was slain by a peasant.

Having completed their task after occupying the southern shore of the Caspian Sea and reaching Azerbaijan, the two generals Jebe and Sübötäi made some explorations beyond the Caspian Sea. With the permission of Jenghiz Khan they made an incursion into the Caucasus, defended by the Georgian Christian army, the Alans, and Cumans, and invaded Russia. In May 1223 the Mongols defeated the Russian princes together with their allies the Cumans, in the



A Mongol cavalry pursuit (MS *Jami-et Tawarikh*, 1314, Hazine 1653, p. 165b). Courtesy Topkapu Saray Museum, Istanbul.

battle beside the Kalka. This was the tragic end of the legend that a new David had arisen who would help the Christians defeat the Muslims.

Before his death, Jenghiz Khan had been able to defeat and subjugate the Tangut realm of Hsi-Hsia whose ruler had refused to send auxiliaries to support the campaign against Muhammad II. He launched the expedition in the spring of 1226. Although weakened by a serious accident suffered while hunting, Jenghiz Khan managed to direct this destructive campaign and, in the summer of 1227, his generals captured the Tangut capital Ning-hsia. The Tangut king surrendered, but Jenghiz Khan, now seriously ill, was unable to accept either the surrender or the magnificent gifts brought by the defeated king. He issued the order, nevertheless, to put him to death.

From among his three surviving sons, Jagatai, Ogödäi (Ogotai), and Tolui, Jenghiz appointed Ogödäi as his successor, admonishing Tolui and Jagatai to live peaceably with each other. He died on August 8, 1227, after giving orders to exterminate all the inhabitants of the conquered city and advising his sons how to pursue the war against the King of Gold, the Mongol's hereditary enemy, after his death.

So it happened that one single, ingenious, intelligent, but unscrupulous and barbarian ruler founded an empire which exceeded all other conquests previously made in the world's history. Fire, blood, and ruins marked the path of the cruel Mongol hordes, and the subjected peoples were ruled with an iron hand by the conquerors.

One may ask how the scion of a barbarian nomadic nation could have obtained such an immense military and political success in such a short time. It was first of all the Mongol army, organized and trained by the military genius of Jenghiz and inspired with the idea that its leader was predestined by the "Eternal Blue Sky" to become master of the world. Jenghiz's army was greatly superior to the armies of all his neighboring nations, even the experienced Chinese warriors.

The other important factor which facilitated his conquests was Jenghiz's understanding of the importance of possessing good intelligence about any nation about to be conquered. The Mongols enjoyed commercial relations with China before the time of Jenghiz Khan, especially through the intermediary of the Tungus, and knew more about that country than European nations. However, Jenghiz's best informers were the Muslim merchants, as they controlled all the trade between China and Central Asia. They knew all the routes and, being highly cultivated, were good observers and were well acquainted with the economic and political situation of every district with which they traded. By reason of their trade they had numerous contacts in many quarters, and all the lands from Persia to China through which their caravans passed were well known to them.

Jenghiz Khan had had a long acquaintance with them, often entertaining them at his court, listening for hours to their information, and surmising how important their experiences would be for the achievement of his plans. They gave him freely all the information he needed because they saw that his strict régime would make the connection between distant countries easier, and that this would garner greater profits for their trade. This explains how the Muslim capitalist merchants became ardent supporters of the Mongol cause.

Besides this, Jenghiz Khan would send spies into the enemy lands he wished to subject, trying to obtain any possible information on the military strength of the neighboring nations and on the rivalries among the members of the ruling class, which his diplomacy could exploit to weaken the adversary. Numerous scouting parties preceded the main armies probing the terrain, observing the movement of the hostile army and reporting to headquarters all intelligence discovered.

Jenghiz Khan endeavored to gain intelligence not only about China and the Khwarizmian Empire, but also about the countries far beyond his immediate goal which could be attacked after those conquests already planned, or, perhaps, only under his successors. This is shown by his sending an expeditionary force of 30,000 men under Jebe and Söbötäi beyond the north coast of the Caspian Sea. He gave his two generals three years to investigate and conquer the lands beyond the Caspian Sea, to find out what kind of peoples dwelt there, how important their realms appeared to be, and how strong were their armies. We have seen how fateful this decision of the khan was to be for the Caucasian peoples and for Russia. During his stay on the shores of the Caspian Sea in winter quarters, Söbötäi sent spies into all neighboring territories. He tried to obtain all possible intelligence from prisoners, merchants, and other informers about the white race, about European peoples and realms. The intelligence obtained by him on Russia and Central Europe was so precise that Jenghiz Khan's successors were able to draw up on this basis a complete plan for the conquest of Europe. Söbötäi himself led the first part of this conquest, profiting from the intelligence he had gathered during the three years of his reconnaissance from the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Muhammad II, Shah of the Khwarizmian Empire, lost his battle and his life because of lack of good intelligence as to the Mongol strength. He obtained his first information on Jenghiz Khan's army from the Muslim envoys whom the khan had sent to his court. From this information he concluded that he had a good chance of blocking the Mongol advance, because his army was larger and his realm had many strong and well-garrisoned fortresses which the Mongol cavalry could not conquer. He did not know that, in the meantime, Jenghiz Khan had acquired, with the help of Chinese engineers, heavy machinery, catapults, and artillery for the destruction of the walls of fortified cities. Instead of concentrating his troops against the advance of the mainstream of the Mongol army, Muhammad dispersed them in the fortified places, without paying sufficient attention to securing the communications between them.

Jenghiz Khan was, however, also well aware that a ruler needs to be well informed about the situation in conquered countries and that he has to be in continuous contact, not only with the generals of his armies, but also with his homeland. In conformity with this important objective the organization of post-horse stations (*jami*) along the imperial highways became a major task of the Mongol Empire. This organization was initiated by Jenghiz and is mentioned in his *Yasaq*. Each station or *jam*, erected at a distance of a day's journey, had to be provided with horses (often as many as twenty), fodder, and food and drink for the travellers. An annual inspection of each *jam* was ordered. The service was free for the use of ambassadors and the khan's messengers. Post service taxes and duties, and a levy of cattle and forage were imposed.

The *jami* were established along the road at every twenty-five or thirty miles. The imperial messengers called arrow-messengers (*elci*) rode with bandaged head and trunk in order to make known their character and the importance of their message, and were entitled to the best mounts as relays at the *jami*. How well this new Mongol institution functioned is illustrated by the ride made by Söbötäi from the northern coast of the Caspian Sea to the winter quarters of Jenghiz between Samarkand and Bokhara where Jenghiz was waiting for him. The khan urgently needed the report on Söbötäi's intelligence, collected on his rapid ride throughout the Khwarizmian Empire in pursuit of Shah Muhammad. Söbötäi, riding as an arrow-messenger on the new post road at the utmost speed, by day and by night, stopping at the *jami* only to exchange horses, sometimes stopping to eat a meal or take a few hours' sleep, covered the 1,200 miles separating him from his master in little more than a week. Sübötäi's report that there was no new army in the west to be accounted for decided the further strategy of Jenghiz. He gave Sübötäi and Jebe permission to cross the mountains beyond the Caspian Sea, scout and raid the countries behind it, and return to Mongolia after three years through the Kipchak steppes. Following this decision of the khan, Sübötäi remounted and in a fortnight, using the relays of the post, rode back to join his troops on the Caspian Sea.

The question arises as to how Jenghiz Khan conceived the idea of organizing such an ingenious institution as a regular post with relays for obtaining rapid information, for nothing similar had existed during the time of the nomadic Mongols before him. Many think that he was inspired by the Chinese example.

It is true that the Chinese did have an imperial postal organization, but its origins cannot yet be traced with certainty. It must be connected with the development of communications by roads, or water, across the immense tracts of the Chinese lands. Huang-ti, one of the "Three Emperors" who must be regarded as rather mythical creations of Chinese prehistory, is supposed not only to have started the building of temples and houses, but also to have invented many means of transport, such as carts drawn by oxen, and travel by boats on the lakes and rivers of his empire. With the growth of the empire it became evident that the administration of the west and far distant provinces was impossible without reliable communications from the central power to and from them, by official couriers. This institution must have developed early, and gradually, but the history of its origin and development has still to be written. So far only a few Chinese and Japanese authors have tried to collect information on the Chinese state post at different periods, using only part of the documentation which is preserved, according to the bibliographical sketch given by P. Olbricht (pp. 21–36).

The first literary documents concerning the existence of a kind of post can be traced only to the time of the Chou dynasty (about 1122–256 B.C.), especially in its late feudal period. One of the Chinese historians, Lao Tsui, in his work published and quoted by P. Olbricht in 1940, recorded the existence of the couriers and envoys of numerous heads of small states to their princely assemblies between 722 and 481 B.C. But we cannot yet discern in this diplomatic activity any regular establishment, although the existence of temporary relays on some roads cannot be excluded.

Important progress towards more regular and stable communications between the governors of the provinces and the emperor was made by the Emperor Shi Huang Ti (247–210 B.C.). After abolishing the feudal system, he divided the country into provinces, governed by officers appointed by him and directly responsible to him. He constructed roads through the whole empire, in order to impose communications between the court and the governors. He is also praised as the builder of canals for water transport and as the constructor of numerous public buildings.

During the reign of the Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 9), a regular official information service by courier was organized on certain roads of the state post. On such roads relay stations were erected at certain distances for the couriers and official travellers, with full provisions for their comfort and for the efficiency of their service. The horses for the post station were provided by the state. The relay stations were administered by local authorities responsible to a central office. A special "horse tax" was imposed on the population which had also to provide the necessary personnel for the functioning of the relays.

This organization of the post degenerated during the following period and was only restored during the reign of the T'ang dynasty (618–907). During the first century of their reign the emperors established a network of post roads through their vast territory, constructing relays at easy distances with luxurious lodging houses for the users of the imperial post. Communications by rivers and canals were also included in the network. Legal injunctions were issued for the maintenance of the post roads and relays by rich and influential local families. The horses were generally supplied by the state. The poorer population living near the relays supplied the necessary personnel to maintain the buildings, to care for the horses in the pastures, and to cultivate the land allotted to the post relays. The governors of the provinces financed the expenses of running the post. Special inspectors were appointed to survey the regular operation of the post. The whole organization was placed under the supervision of the ministry of war. It was only in the middle of the eighth century that special directors for the individual relays were installed. This organization of the imperial post, carried out during the T'ang dynasty, was the basis for the further development of the institution.

The first known Arab traveller to visit China during the reign of the T'ang dynasty was the famous merchant Sulaiman. The report on his travels to India and China was written in A.D. 851 by himself, or by someone to whom Sulaiman had recounted his experiences.

He must have known about the Chinese postal system, although he does not mention it in his description of China. However, in his account we read an interesting detail which shows us that the Chinese took wise precautions for the security of their country and kept a close check on all travellers. He relates:

> Everybody who wants to travel from one province to another has to provide himself with two letters, one by the governor, the other by the eunuch of his residence. The one by the governor is a kind of a passport for travelling. It contains the name of the traveller and of his companions, and the name of the tribe to which he belongs. Every person who wants to travel in China, be it a Chinese or an Arab, or anybody else, is bound to have with him such a document to identify himself. The document issued by the eunuch states how much money the traveller has with him and enumerates all the objects which he carries with him. Guards are posted on all roads, to whom these documents have to be presented. After examining them, they write down "this and this person, son of . . . passed through this post." All this is arranged for the security of the travellers.

Similar procedure was prescribed for travellers by boat. These precautions and the use of passports in China must have been a very old custom. J. T. Reinaud, in his commentary to his edition of Sulaiman's travels (pp. 41, 118), remarks (note 90) that passports and permits to travel are mentioned in Tcheoun-li, which was issued several centuries before this era. Sulaiman might have known that similar practices had existed in Egypt, where they were maintained even after the conquest by the Arabs.

Ibn Wahab, another Arab traveller, was perhaps the first Arab to obtain the privilege of using the comfortable transportation of the Chinese imperial post. His story is recounted by Abu Zayd al-Hasan, who had lived at Siraf, which was at that time an important commercial harbor, and who had completed Sulaiman's description with other stories which were communicated to him by other sailors and merchants who had visited China and India, or who had heard about those lands from other travellers. Ibn Wahab had established himself at Siraf after the destruction of his residence in Basra in 870. He embarked on a boat about to sail to China and reached its capital. There he was received by the emperor after the latter had verified that Ibn Wahab's family had been related to the Prophet. Abu Zayd describes the long conversation with the emperor according to Ibn Wahab's account. After the audience the emperor presented precious gifts to his guest and granted him the privilege of the mule transport of the royal post. According to Abu Zayd, Ibn Wahab returned to Iraq in 915.

In another passage Abu Zayd compares the Chinese post with the Arab post. He describes the imperial post in the following terms: "The correspondence between the emperor of China, the governors of the cities and the eunuchs is transported on the post mules. The mules have their tails cut off in the same way as the mules in our country. These mules follow routes which have been determined in advance."

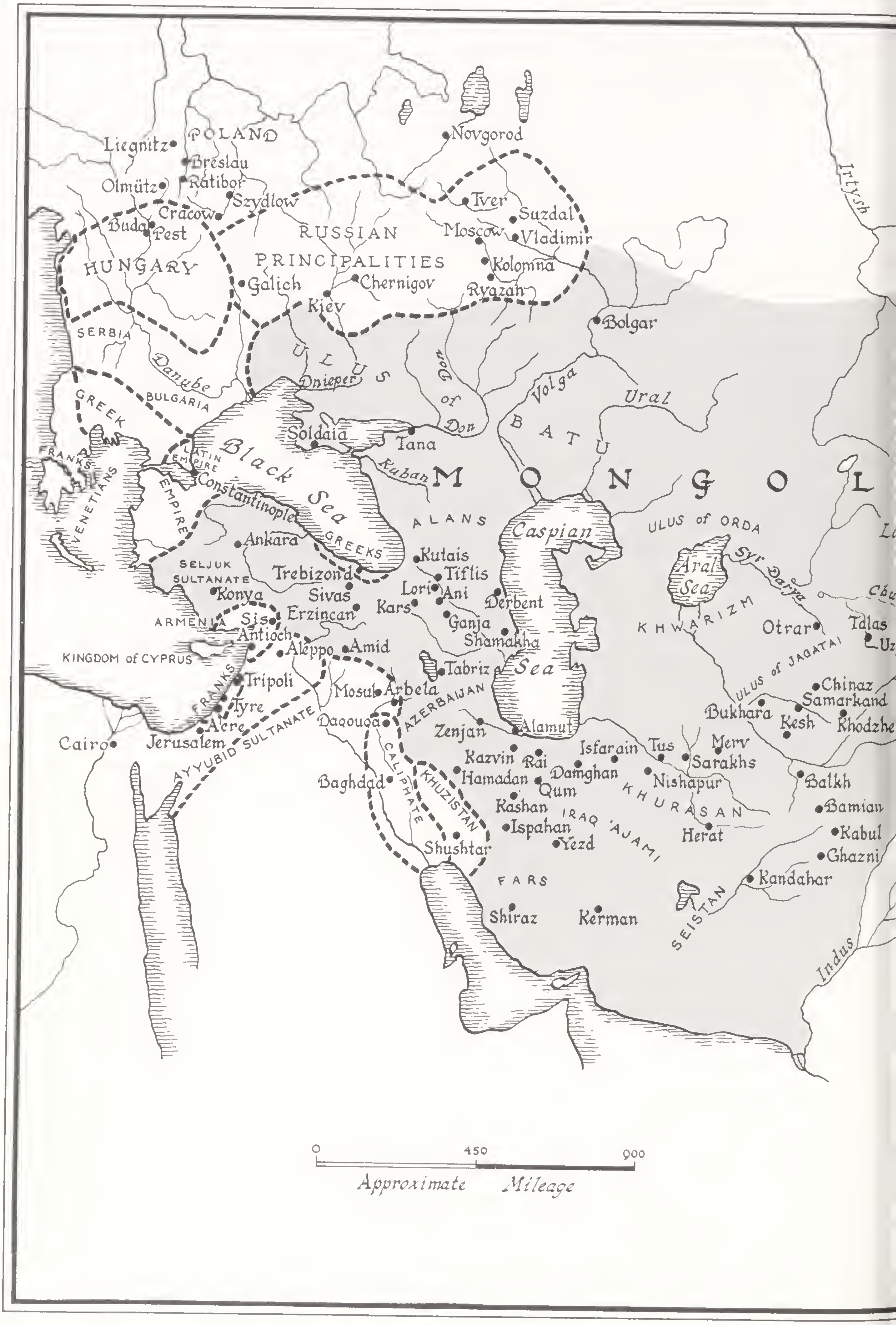
Internal troubles caused by insurrection and struggles for supreme power in the ninth and tenth centuries wreaked havoc in the Chinese post organization, and attempts at a reorganization of the service could not stop the decay of the once flourishing institution.

The Sung dynasty (960–1279) tried to reconstruct the post organization on a new basis. The service of couriers was entrusted exclusively to soldiers, who acted as runners between stations erected at shorter distances. The runners transmitted not only military orders, but all the correspondence concerning the administration of the empire. Even letters of the employees in the relays to their families were delivered by this military courier service. Horses were later used for speedier communications. In some provinces the population continued to support the old postal system for local communication. But even this imperial postal system deteriorated, especially when the Sung dynasty found it necessary to yield to the pressure of the Kin (Chin) dynasty which dominated north China, and had to limit their rule to the south only. The Kin, however, continued to use the post service as it had been established by the T'ang.

It would thus seem natural to assume that Jenghiz Khan simply imitated the post service system which he had found in China after the conquest of the Kin Empire. However, he must have had some knowledge of such an information system before he invaded China. We have seen that the Chinese post organization was known to Arab merchants. We can suppose that Ibn Wahab was not the only Arab to have had a personal acquaintance with this institution. Those Arabs who came to the court of Jenghiz Khan and freely gave him information on their experiences in China and Central Asia may certainly have remembered that such an organization had existed also in the Abbasid Empire. It is interesting to note that Abu Zayd had learned that the Chinese were marking the tails of the mules used in the post service in the same way as did the Arabs. Even before invading China Jenghiz Khan must have had in mind the establishment of an information system between his armies and the homeland, on the basis of what he had learned from the Arab merchants. He profited, of course, from what he had found in China. In any case, the initiative for the establishment of the Mongol state post and information service has to be ascribed to Jenghiz Khan.

It is not our intention to describe in detail the further expansion of the Mongol Empire. A short sketch should be sufficient. Ogödäi (1229–1241) continued the conquests and devastations. Between 1230 and 1234 the Kin Empire was definitely subjected, and further wars were decided upon at the Mongol *quriltai* in 1233 against the Sungs in southern China, against Korea, Western Asia, and against Europe. Batu's campaign against Europe, under the command of Sübötäi, was the most devastating. The Bulgars on the Volga were destroyed, the Cumans were defeated, and part of them fled to Hungary where they mixed with the Magyars. From the Volga the Mongols invaded Russia, and subjected and destroyed its principalities during a winter campaign. In 1240 Kiev was conquered and devastated and its population massacred. In 1241 the hordes invaded Poland, Germany, and Hungary, after defeating the Poles at Lignitz. The Hungarian King Bela II escaped, but was pursued as far as the Adriatic coast. Only the arrival of a messenger on the state post announcing the death of Ogödäi saved the rest of Europe from a similar fate. Batu had to return to be present at the *quriltai* which was to elect Ogödäi's successor. On his way back he subjugated Bulgaria, Wallachia, and Moldavia (modern Rumania). He subsequently settled on the lower Volga, where a Mongol state was organized under the name of Golden Horde after the magnificent tent with a golden roof erected by Batu. It ruled over the whole of Russia to the Crimea, with its capital at Sarai. Its khans recognized the supremacy of the Great Khan but were almost independent. The new empire was also called Western Kipchak, because it ruled over the territory of subjected Cumans.

Ogödäi was succeeded by his son Kuyuk, who reigned only seven years. After his death dissensions between the houses of Ogödäi and Jagatai broke into open war, which ended in 1251 when Mongka, the eldest son of Tolui and nephew of Ogödäi, was elected khan. To quell disturbances in the province of Persia, Mongka sent his brother Hulägu with an army with the order to destroy the sect of the Assassins, who were regarded as the cause of the disorders. After securing the dismantling of fifty main fortresses of the sect, Hulägu's army attacked the Assassins, and all of them, men and women, were mercilessly slaughtered. Hulägu thus crossed the mountains and arrived before Baghdad. As the Caliph Mustasim had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Ganja
Antioch
Shamakha
Uz
KINGDOM of CYPRUS
Aleppo
Amid
Tabriz
ULUS of JAGATAI
Tripoli
Mosul
Arbela
Chinaz
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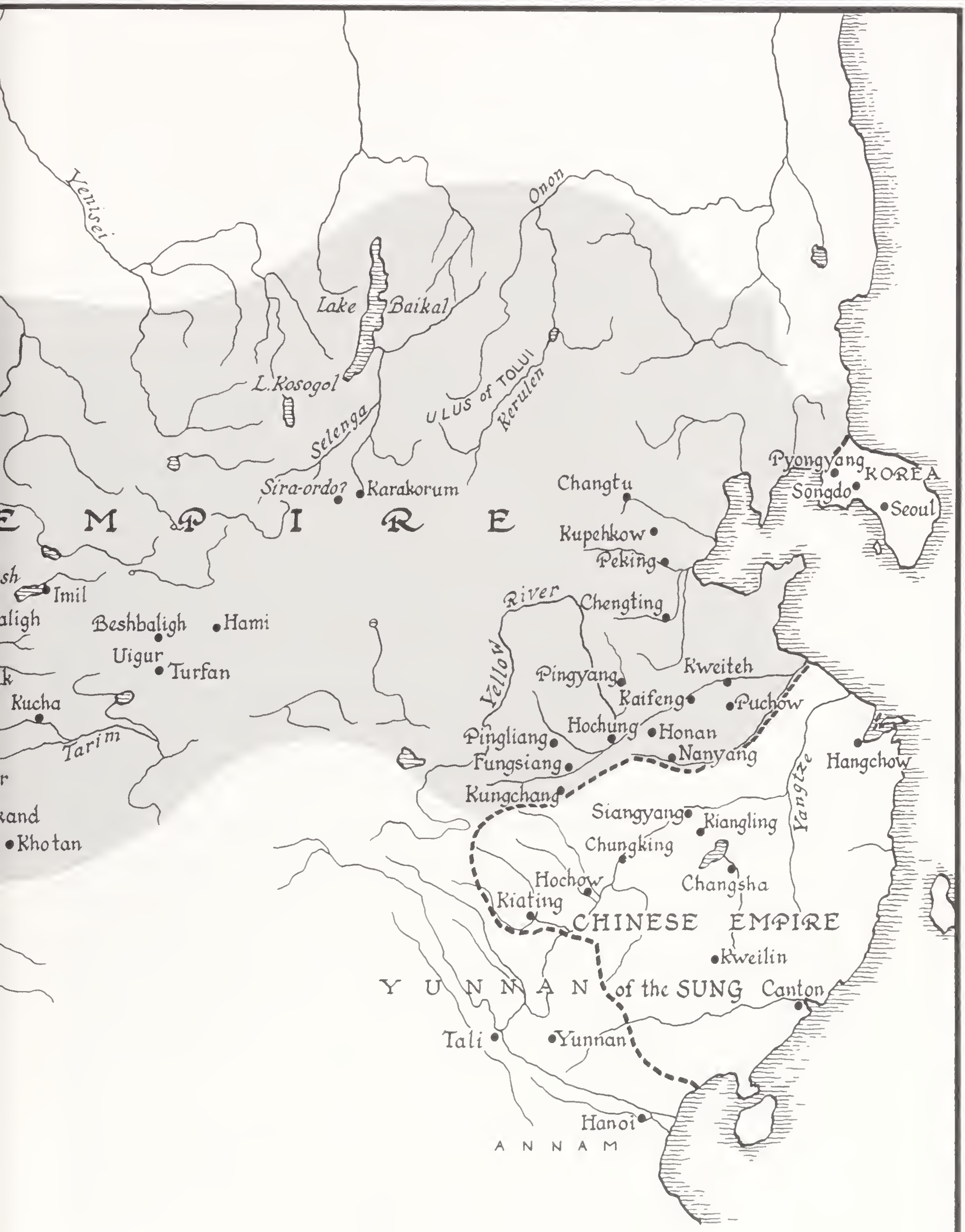
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THE MONGOL EMPIRE BETWEEN
1230 and 1255

refused to surrender, the Mongols breached the walls, sacked the city, and executed the last Caliph of Baghdad. Hulägu continued the devastation of the former provinces of the caliph. Only in 1260 was the thrust of the Mongols in Africa stopped, when their army was defeated by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars, the ruler of Egypt.

Hulägu, hitherto a vassal of Mongka, was recognized as ruler of the conquered provinces. He assumed the title of Ilkhan and, although recognizing the khan as his sovereign, was practically independent.

At the same time, while Hulägu was conquering Asia, Mongka and his other brother, Kublai, were invading southern China. They advanced into Tonkin and even invaded Tibet. Kublai, educated by a Chinese wise man, forbade the destruction of cities and the massacre of conquered peoples. During this expedition Mongka died of dysentery.

A new *quriltai* was assembled in great haste by the Mongolian chieftains, who distrusted Kublai; they elected Mongka's youngest brother, Ariq-bögä, viceroy in Karakorum. Kublai reacted promptly. He had himself proclaimed khan by his army and the Mongolian viceroy of the Chinese provinces, and, to strengthen his position, had himself crowned as Son of Heaven by the Chinese princes, generals, and mandarins. He defeated the army of Ariq-bögä and also that of Qaidu, Ogödäi's grandson. Then he continued his great struggle against the Sung Empire. The Empress Mother, regent for the child-emperor, surrendered her capital, the famous Hangchow. The last resistance of some cabinet ministers, who had fled southeastward and had proclaimed the elder brother of the captured emperor as their ruler, was broken by Kublai's able general, Bayan. The defeat of the rebels' fleet, which, in desperation, had drowned their emperor, put a definite end to the Sung Empire in 1279. The whole of China was united under one foreign ruler and was to remain united down to modern times.

The Mongol Empire, united with China, was manifesting a more stable and firm state organization. The Chinese Yüan dynasty, as distinguished from the Mongol Empire, was effectively founded by Kublai, although he only adopted the dynastic title in 1271. He ruled over China according to Chinese precedents and was called by the Chinese Shih-tsu. He transferred the winter capital to Yenching in 1260, where he constructed Khanbaligh or Tatu (Peking) in 1267.

Jenghiz Khan's successors continued to take good care of the state post, which was the means of their most reliable intelligence service. Soon after his accession, Jenghiz's successor Ogödäi issued two decrees, in 1229 and in 1232, concerning the service of couriers. After his victory over the Kin dynasty in 1234, he solemnly announced at the *quriltai* the main statutes of the postal service. Speaking of his exploits and confessing his mistakes—especially in too often becoming drunk, according to the report contained in the *Secret History of the Mongols*—Ogödäi declared that, besides the destruction of the Kin dynasty, the greatest of his achievements was the erection of new postal roads with *jami* throughout the whole empire, which shows how highly the Mongols appreciated this service. This reorganization seemed to be necessary following the extension of Mongol sovereignty over the whole of northern China. The new residence of Batu at Sarai on the Volga had also to be connected with the rest of the empire. Ogödäi seems to have appointed a special postmaster (*Amir*) to maintain the link with the khan of the princes of the dynasty. Ogödäi ordered two faithful followers of Jenghiz Khan—Aracin and Togusar—to survey the reorganization of the post, decided at this important *quriltai*. The report of the *Secret History of the Mongols* is also confirmed by the Persian historian Rashid al-Din. Ogödäi thus completed at this meeting the organization of the post, which he had initiated by his previous decrees mentioned above. Mongka paid special attention to the proper functioning of the post. He ordered that all revenues from the provinces should be used to pay the cost of the local armies and for the promotion and improvement of postal communications. As we will see, it was Kublai who brought the post organization to such perfection that its formation and functioning astonished his contemporaries, and is still recognized as an outstanding achievement by historians.

As we have seen, there are not many Mongolian documents which illustrate the origin and functioning of the post and its importance in the administration of the state during the purely Mongolian period of the empire. Fortunately, we are in possession of some Western sources which fill this gap and help us to see how this organization worked. These sources are the accounts of western envoys who had travelled to the courts of the khans and who often left us picturesque descriptions of their experiences.

The appearance of the Mongols in the heart of Europe awakened the west to the horrible danger which threatened them from the Far East, where mighty khans were governing most of Asia and a great part of eastern Europe. The immediate threat was averted by the death of the Great Khan Ogödäi, but Batu remained encamped on the Volga, and a new onslaught on the rest of Europe by the Mongols was possible following the election of a new khan and the reorganization of the Mongol Empire. Western Europe was divided and split by the war raging between the Emperor Frederick II and the Pope. It was high time to obtain further knowledge of the Mongol rulers and their plans, and to approach the new khan in order to avert a new campaign against the west.

Pope Innocent IV, aware of this, sent a mission to the Mongols. Two Franciscans were chosen for this dangerous undertaking—Lawrence of Portugal and Giovanni de Piano Carpini; the latter described the journey in a long report. They were the first Westerners to undergo the watchfulness of the Mongol border guards. After traversing Galicia and Kiev, they were stopped in the Russian steppes by the Mongol advance guard and arrested. But because they claimed to be envoys of the Pope bearing a message to the khan, the Mongols, respecting the law stressed by Jenghiz in his *Yasaq* commanding respect for envoys, conducted them first to their commander Carenza. The latter gave them an escort which accompanied them to the residence of Batu on the lower Volga. Batu decided that they should go to the court of the new Khan Güyük in Mongolia, and Tatar guides accompanied them. They travelled rapidly, as Batu wished them to reach Karakorum to be present at the solemn inauguration of the new khan. It is evident from their description that they were led along the postal road, probably on the new branch erected by Ogödäi to link up Batu's residence with Karakorum. Riding hard, they had fresh horses five or seven times a day, provided by the *jami*. From the lands of the Cumans, conquered and occupied by the Mongols, they reached that of the Kang-li Turcs, whence they entered the land of the former Khwarizmian Empire. Then they traversed the former Kingdom of Kara-Khitai, the country of the Naimans, and reached the camp of Orda, Batu's brother. From the city of Divult (Imil) they had again to ride hard for three weeks, arriving at the *orda* of Güyük on July 22. It was a remarkable achievement, and a very hard experience for the friars, possible only because of a generous supply of relay horses by the *jami*.

Carpini does not describe the Mongol post in detail, but he knew how it functioned. In one passage of his report he says, "Whatever envoys the khan dispatches, to whatever place and wherever it may be, they are bound to give them without delay packhorses and provisions. Also from whatever quarter envoys come to him bearing tribute, they have likewise to be provided with horses, carts, and supplies. This post service is, however, only for official messengers, envoys, and embassies."

The friars do not describe the return journey in detail, mentioning only that they travelled over open steppes for six months during the winter, suffering incredible hardship. Leaving Karakorum on November 17, 1246 they reached Batu's *orda* on May 9, 1247. They must have followed the same road through Asia, and it is rather surprising that they had often to sleep in the snow, or on the open plain, scraping out a place to sleep with their feet, as Carpini describes it. After a stay of a month at Batu's *orda* they were given a letter of safe conduct; after a journey of fifteen days, led by Mongol guides, they reached Kiev.

Giovanni de Piano Carpini's mission was, of course, unsuccessful. In his missive to the Pope, the khan confessed that he did not understand why he and his people should become Christians. If the Pope wished to be at peace with the Mongols, then he and his Christian princes should submit to the khan in Karakorum and bring tribute.

The Pope's envoys received the impression that the Mongols were preparing for a new invasion of Europe, and they refused to take any Mongolian envoys with them for fear that their role would be to gather intelligence about the West to help them in their campaign. The Pope decided to send a further embassy composed of five Dominican friars. They were to visit the nearest camp of the Mongolian army on the frontier of Asia Minor and present to its commander the Pope's letter in which he requested the cessation of hostilities against the Christians. The friar Ascelin, leader of the embassy, got to the camp of Baiju in May 1247. He and his friars were threatened with execution for refusing to perform the usual act of homage, but they were saved by the timely arrival of a senior official and envoy of the Great Khan Eljigidäi, who was of the opinion that it might prove useful to enter into relations with the West. Ascelin was sent back with a letter containing the same invitation to submission. He was accompanied by two Mongol envoys, one of them a Christian. They were received by the Pope in 1248. At the same time, Eljigidäi himself sent two envoys—both Nestorian Christians—to the French King St. Louis to establish good relations with him, as the king was preparing a crusade against Egypt. His envoys met King Louis in Cyprus; in the letter they delivered to him, Eljigidäi declared that the Great Khan intended to protect the Christians and help them in the recovery of Jerusalem. Encouraged by such a message, Louis sent an embassy to the khan, composed of three Dominicans, whose leader was Andrew of Longjumeau who spoke Persian. Among the rich presents which the ambassadors were given to present to the khan was a beautiful tent chapel in which all the mysteries of the Christian faith were depicted.

Unfortunately, by the time they arrived, the khan was already dead, and the envoys were presented to the Regent Oghul Qaimish, Güyük's widow, at her court on the southeast of Lake Balkash. Their arrival was interpreted as an act of homage and submission, and their presents accepted as tribute, for the letter sent by the regent to the king contained the same demand for submission, with the threat of punishment should the king refuse.

The reports that there were many Christians living in the empire of the Mongols, as well as the rumor that even Sartaq, the son of Batu, had been converted, encouraged the King of France to send another mission of a decidedly more religious character to Sartaq and Batu in 1253. The envoys were two Franciscan friars, William of Rubruck and Bartholomew of Cremona, with a clerk and an Arab interpreter. Although a religious mission, the envoys also carried a letter to the Great Khan. They travelled by the old highway to Central Asia, through Constantinople and the Crimea. They reached Soldaia (Sudak) in May where they equipped themselves with carts and horses, and three days afterwards they reached the first Mongol frontier station. They were subjected to a strict investigation as to the purpose of their journey and the contents of their carts. Thanks to letters of recommendation given them by the Latin Emperor of Constantinople Baldwin II to a Captain Scatatai, a relative of Batu, they were permitted to continue their journey to the *orda* of Sartaq. On July 22, 1253, they reached the river Don and were taken across by villagers who were charged by Sartaq and Batu with such duties. This seems to be the first indication that the Mongols of the Golden Horde had made any arrangements to facilitate the travel of envoys and merchants to the *ordas* of their khans. No special provision seems to have existed for the stretch from the frontier station to this village, as one can conclude from the narrative of Rubruck. The regular state post station was at a distance of four days' journey from the Don. Then Rubruck says with satisfaction, "we got horses and oxen and went from station to station until arriving at Sartaq's camp" on July 31. They left their carts at the *jam* near the camp and rode to the *orda* of Batu, escaping bands of refugees who endangered their progress.

When they reached the Volga they were brought across the river in boats manned by the inhabitants of a village founded by Batu. This arrangement was similar to that described on the river Don. Batu sent Rubruck to the Khan Mongka (1251–1259), son of

Tolui, who had been elected khan instead of Güyük's widow's son. It appears that Rubruck, who also acted as Batu's envoy to Mongka, and was provided with a guide by him, followed the same post road as Carpini and, with his companions, was provided with horses at the *jami*. The service was not always good, as they were strangers and the best horses were given to official messengers. Rubruck always had to be given the strongest horse because he was very fat and heavy. However, the friar complains that his horse did not always behave as it should and as he expected. He does not spare bitter words in describing the journey. They were also provided with food, but in the Mongol manner, which the friar did not like: some millet in the morning and a main meal with meat in the evening. Their guide was everywhere greeted with great respect as Batu's envoy to the khan. They passed the Kirghiz Steppe and reached the city of Cailac, where they awaited instructions which Batu's scribe was to deliver to their guide. The post road went through mountainous regions, and the only inhabitants they met were the men in charge of the *jami*. They often made two days' journey in one. After passing through Dzungaria, the former country of the Naimans, they reached the *orda* of the Great Khan. The officer in charge of the last *jam* wished to keep them on their journey for a fortnight in order to show them the immensity of the khan's lands, but their guide prevented such a circuitous route, and they were allowed to continue on the direct route.

The return journey from Mongka's *orda* to that of Batu lasted two months and ten days. They travelled through different regions but came across the same people. During the summer the roads went through far more northerly districts than when they had journeyed during the winter. Even this summer route was provided with *jami*, for Rubruck says that they did not rest during the whole journey except for one single day when they could not obtain horses. A military escort was given to him by Batu on the way to and through Derbent, because the Alans and the Lesgians in the Caucasus were still putting up resistance to the Mongols. Travelling through Georgia, Armenia, Persia, and Seljuk Asia Minor, Rubruck reached Tripoli in Syria.

When we compare the descriptions of the journeys of de Piano Carpini and Rubruck, we have the impression that there had been an improvement made in the organization of the post service in the years between 1245 and 1253. Rubruck, of course, complains of many things—the service given by the employees of the *jami*, about the horses, and about the food—but he seems to have travelled more comfortably than Carpini. His complaints are probably exaggerated, because he hated the Mongols.

This improvement should be ascribed to the efforts of the Khans Güyük and Mongka, both of whom were anxious to make the post and messenger service speedier and more comfortable. But it was the Great Khan Kublai who brought this organization almost to perfection. We have a very eloquent description of the post and messenger service as it worked during the reign of Kublai, written by Marco Polo, a Venetian by birth who accompanied his father and uncle on their second journey to China. On reaching the Persian Gulf, they set out overland for China, arriving about May 1275. They were shown into the presence of Kublai, who was at his summer residence at Chandu. They left China in 1291, reaching Venice in 1295, after a twenty-five year absence. They certainly knew the Mongol-Chinese post service well, because they had the opportunity of using it. When the brothers, at the end of their first stay in China, were sent by Kublai to the Pope with the message that the khan needed about one hundred learned religious men well versed in all the sciences for the instruction of his people, the khan handed them the Golden Tablet which entitled them to use the official post service, "that wherever they went, they were to be furnished with all the necessary quarters, and with horses and men to escort them from one town to another."

Marco Polo describes first the numerous postal roads leading from the residence of the khan to all the provinces and bearing the names of the provinces. At a distance of twenty-five miles from each other, he says, are stages called *jami*, which means horse-post station. When describing the stations Marco seems to exaggerate a little. He describes them as "large and fine palaces where the envoys lodge, with splendid beds furnished with rich silk sheets, and with everything else that an important envoy may need." Such luxurious buildings might have existed at certain distances for "important envoys," but hardly for simple messengers. Each station had three or four hundred horses. The distances between the stations in mountainous regions are, according to his description, greater, being thirty-five and even more than forty miles. But they are equipped as well as other stations, with the horses, officers, and staff needed for the service. They formed large villages. There are more than ten thousand such stations—Marco Polo calls them palaces—and more than 200,000 horses are kept there.

According to Marco Polo, the horses were supplied by the cities and villages near the stations. The number of animals to be provided by the cities is determined after inquiries made by men experienced in this matter. The cities kept the horses as well as the tribute owed to the khan. Generally only about two hundred horses are available at the stations, the other two hundred being out to pasture; they are changed every month. If the messenger must cross a lake, the neighboring cities must have in readiness three or four boats capable of making a speedy crossing. If he must cross a desert, taking several days, the city nearest the desert must supply him with horses and food and must escort him to the other side. The khan supplied horses only to those stations in uninhabited regions.

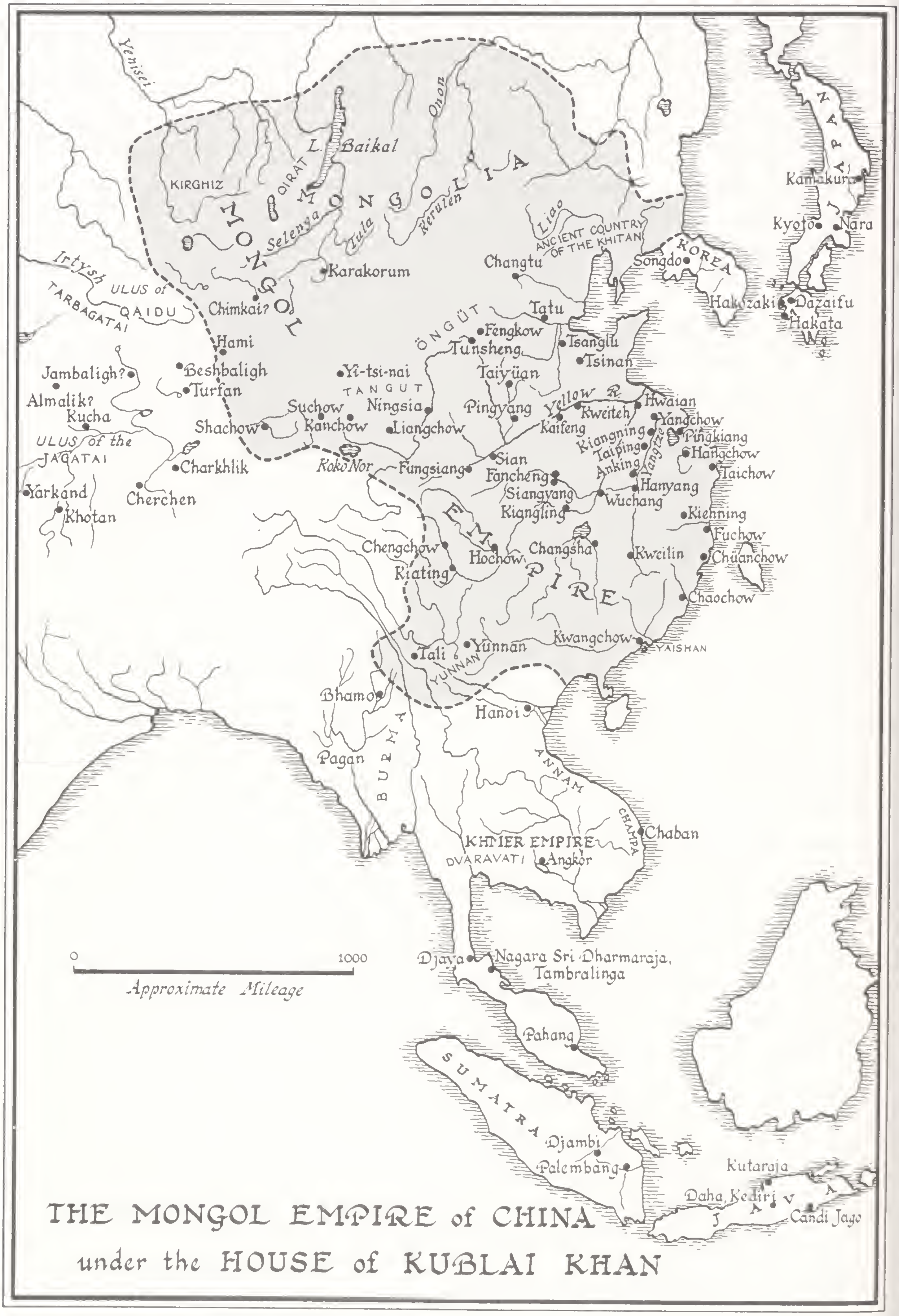
In this way, the messenger on horseback, when in great haste and bearing important intelligence, can cover 200 to 250 miles a day. He swathes his belly, binds his head, and must bear the tablet with the ensign of the gerfalcon to show that he must travel with the utmost speed. When approaching a station he sounds a kind of horn that can be heard a long way off, and on hearing the horn the staff of the *jami* saddle a swift horse in readiness. The messenger changes his mount and without resting sets off again at full speed to the next station, where the same procedure is followed. When riding through the night and if there is no moon, the men of the station must precede him with lights to his next stop. In this case, of course, his speed is reduced.

We learn from Marco Polo that, besides the horse-post, Kublai had introduced an information service by runners:

> Every three miles between the stations, there is a small village where live foot-runners whose duty it is to carry messages to the khan. They wear a broad belt hung all around with bells so that they may be observed from far away. They always run at full speed for the three miles to the other runner stations. Another runner is waiting, takes from his colleague what he is carrying, receives a slip of paper from the clerk, and runs to the next station. In this way the khan receives news in a day and a night from places at a distance of ten days' journey.

The runners sometimes have to deliver to the khan fresh fruit or vegetables from ten days' distance away. At each runner-station a clerk is appointed who has to register the day and hour of the arrival of the messenger and of his departure to the next station. The runners are freed from taxation and paid by the khan. Special inspectors have to visit the stations every month to investigate how the runners perform their duties.

Marco Polo himself was often sent as khan's messenger, or en-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ANCIENT COUNTRY OF THE KHITAN
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ULUS of QAIDU
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Candi Jago

THE MONGOL EMPIRE of CHINA under the HOUSE of KUBLAI KHAN
]

voy, to different provinces and lands. When describing how he had performed his duty as envoy to a certain province, Marco Polo discloses that the khan's messengers had another duty besides carrying the message. They were supposed to act also as spies and undercover agents to bring intelligence about the behavior of the inhabitants of the provinces through which they were travelling. If they reported that they had only delivered the message, the khan called them fools and ignorant men. He expected to hear from them all the news they had learned on their mission, together with information on the habits and customs of countries through which they had travelled. Marco Polo confesses that he knew about this and, when sent on a mission, he paid attention to all novelties, rumors, and strange things he might hear or observe, and the khan greatly appreciated his reports.

The first traveller to describe the lands of the Far East after Marco Polo was the Franciscan Friar Odoric. He was sent to the east about the year 1318 as a missionary. He stayed first for some time about 1321 in western India, and went from there to China overland, and reached Peking by way of the Great Canal. He stayed in China for three years. He returned overland across Asia, and died in 1331 at Udine in Italy. Because of his holy life he was beatified by the Pope.

In chapter 40 of Yule's edition of his travels, Odoric describes the Mongolian state post in China:

> And that travellers may have their needs provided for, throughout his whole empire he [the khan] hath caused houses and courts to be established as hostelries, and these houses are called *jami*. In these houses is found everything necessary for subsistence, and for every person who travels throughout those territories, whatever be his conditions, it is ordained that he shall have two meals without payment. And when any matter of news arises in the empire, messengers start incontinently at a great pace on horseback for the court; but if the matter be very serious and urgent they set up upon dromedaries. And when they come near these *jami* hostels or stations, they blow a horn, whereupon mine host of the hostel straightway maketh another messenger get ready; and to him the rider who hath come posting up delivereth the letter, whilst he himself tarrieth for refreshment. And the other taking the letter, maketh haste to the next *jam*, and there doth as did the first. And in this manner the emperor receiveth in the course of one natural day the news of matters from a distance of thirty days' journey.
>
> But the despatch of foot runners is otherwise ordered. For certain appointed runners abide continually in certain station-houses called *chidebes*, and these have a girdle with a number of bells attached to it.

> Now those stations are distant the one from the other perhaps three miles; and when a runner approaches one of those houses he causes those bells of his to jingle very loudly; on which the other runner in waiting at the station getteth ready in haste, and taking the letter hastens to another station as fast as he can. And so it goes from runner to runner until it reaches the Great Khan himself. And so nothing can happen in short, throughout the whole empire, but he hath instantly, or at least very speedily, full intelligence thereof.

When commenting on Odoric's description of the Chinese post Yule quotes a passage from the report given to the Shah Rukh by his ambassadors who had visited the Chinese court about a century after Odoric. Their report confirms Odoric's description, adding something which the friar may have overlooked. They say that between the *jami* many towers were located which they called *kargüs.* Two men were on duty at each tower and were relieved every tenth day. Their duty was to pass light signals from one tower to another in the case of urgent emergency, especially when an enemy army was approaching. "And so the signal passes from one to another till in the space of one day and night a piece of news passes over a distance of three months' march."

These pieces of information on the Mongol-Chinese post given by Western travellers are, in some way, expanded by the famous Arab traveller Ibn Batuta. He was born in Tangier in 1304, and spent most of his life travelling in Muslim countries, India, China, Russia, and Byzantium. The Indian Sultan Muhammad sent him as ambassador to the Chinese court in 1342, but, because of unforeseen difficulties, he only reached China in about 1347. His stay there seems to have been short, but his report gives a few details which complete our knowledge about the Chinese intelligence service during the Mongolian period and about the further development of post stations as hostels for travellers.

Particular importance attaches to what he says about the control of visiting foreigners in China. According to the translation given by Yule (II, 483 ff.) Batuta says, "It is an established custom among the Chinese to take the portrait of any stranger that visits their country. Indeed the thing is carried so far that, if by chance a foreigner commits any action that obliges him to fly from China, they send his portrait into the outlying provinces to assist the search for him, and wherever the original of the portrait is discovered they apprehend him." This custom must have been especially observed when envoys and their foreigners were admitted to an imperial audience. Batuta himself discloses his surprise at having seen his own and his companions' portraits exhibited in the bazaar after his return from an imperial audience.

Strict provisions were made by the imperial police in the ports, as described by Batuta:

> Whenever a Chinese junk is about to undertake a voyage, it is the custom for the admiral of the port and his secretaries to go on board, and to take note of the number of soldiers, servants, and sailors who are embarked. The ship is not allowed to sail till this form has been complied with. And when the junk returns to China the same officials again visit her, and compare the persons found on board with the numbers entered in the register. If anyone is missing the captain is responsible, and must furnish evidence of the death or desertion of the missing individual, or otherwise account for him. If he cannot, he is arrested and punished.
>
> The captain is then obliged to give a detailed report of all the items of the junk's cargo, be their value great or small. Everybody then goes ashore, and the custom-house officers commence an inspection of what everybody has. If they find anything that has been kept back from their knowledge, the junk and all its cargo is forfeited. This is a kind of oppression that I have seen in no country, infidel or Muslim, except in China.

To the post service Batuta devotes only a short but interesting chapter:

> China is the safest as well as the pleasantest of all the regions on the earth for a traveller. You may travel the whole nine months' journey to which the empire extends without the slightest cause for fear, even if you have treasure in your charge. For at every halting place there is a hostelry, superintended by an officer who is posted there with a detachment of horse and foot. Every evening after sunset, or rather after nightfall, this officer visits the inn accompanied by his clerk; he takes down the name of every stranger who is going to pass the night there, seals the list, and then closes the inn door upon them. In the morning he comes again with his clerk, calls everybody by name, and marks them off one by one. He then dispatches along with the travellers a person whose duty is to escort them to the next station, and to bring back from the officer in charge there a written acknowledgment of the arrival of all; otherwise this person is held answerable. This is the practice at all the stations in China from Sin-ul-Sin to Khanbalik [Tatu]. In the inn the traveller finds all needed supplies, especially fowls and geese. But mutton is rare.

This seems to denote a further development of the postal service for the profit of private travellers. The stations (*jami*) were for the officers and messengers who were bound also to supervise private traffic, and the inns erected near the *jami* for the comfort of the travellers. We have noticed a similar development in the history of the post in the Mamluk Empire.

Of course, the sources quoted above do not give details as to the organization and functions of the post. Fortunately, P. Olbricht, in his *Postwesen in China*, completed this information from Mongol and Chinese documents which are rarely accessible to western scholars. He gives a detailed survey not only of documents preserved in the Chinese archives, but also of Chinese and Japanese literature on the subject. He studies in detail the organization of the post as it developed on the basis of Kublai's legislation and rescripts. We shall limit ourselves only to a short sketch of the most important features of the Mongol and Chinese post administration during the reign of Kublai.

It would appear that even in the post organization of the state, Chinese traditions prevailed, but the many Mongol titles in the administration show us that Mongol practice and tradition continued to exist, though mixed with Chinese customs.

It should be noted especially that the Mongol custom of entrusting high positions in the state organization to persons without mentioning the office they had to occupy, had survived down to the reign of Kublai. The imperial decree of 1264 refers only to the name of the man who was in charge of the Chinese post—*Qomugai*—without giving him a title. We also learn from this decree that the dignitary mentioned was in charge only of the post organization on Chinese territory. The old Mongolian post organization formed a separate entity, but we do not know the name of the man who was in charge of it. An attempt at a centralization of this organization was made in 1270, when a general commissariat for the administration of all posts was erected with three general commissars. The commissariat was under the direction of the war ministry, which existed from 1260. This ministry was the executive organ of the central bureau (*chung-shu-sheng*) where all administrative direction was concentrated.

The commissariat was transformed into an autonomous organ, called office of the couriers, in 1276. The war ministry, which had two separate files from 1270 on, one for the care of the post stations and the other for provision of horses needed in their service, continued to be an important mediator between the central bureau and the office of the couriers. In order to improve the courier service between the summer residence at Chandu and the winter residence at Tatu, two special offices of the couriers had to be established in the two Mongolian capitals in 1279. The reorganization of the post service in conquered southern China was entrusted to four officers of the bureau of couriers, but these offices were abolished when the southern Chinese had become familiar with the Mongol breeding and care of horses.

Complaints about mismanagement of the post traffic induced the Emperor Yen-tsung to suppress the office of the couriers and to submit the whole post organization to the ministry of war in 1311.

However, in 1320, the competence of the office of the couriers was re-established and extended over the Mongolian and Chinese posts. From that date on until the extinction of the dynasty the office of the couriers was the only government authority for the imperial post. The regional administration of the different post stations and their staff was in the hands of officers presiding in the governmental districts or provinces. Difficulties which resulted from the unwillingness of rich families to provide the stations with necessary means and horses were the subject of many complaints directed to the office of the couriers or to the war ministry, and were objects of many imperial laws and decrees. These documents also regulated the positions and duties of the postmasters of different stations and of their staff, among which the administrator of the post warehouse occupied a very important place. Even before the conquest of China the Mongols had special controllers whose duty it was to inspect the different stations and control the activity of the postmasters and their staffs. This seems to have been a Mongol "invention" about which the Chinese did not originally know. The controllers resided in the capitals of the government districts and held much higher rank than the postmasters. They had to oversee the authenticity of the permits to use the post presented to the couriers, inspect the performance of their duties, watch over the use of the horses, see that the couriers and other users of the post did not transgress the permitted load of packages for their personal use, inspect the *jami* and the number of horses they must have ready, and prevent misuse of any kind. The controller himself, of course, used the state post, but had first to ask for a pass from the director of the governmental district. In spite of all these precautions misuse of the post could not be completely eliminated, but it has to be acknowledged that the Mongol-Chinese state post functioned well. The Mongols naturally profited by the experiences which the Persians had with their own institutions, and they accepted many Chinese customs in the organization of their state post, but only the Mongols with their strong measures and talent for organization could have brought such an immense and complicated institution to such a state of perfection. The fact that, after the fall of the Mongol Empire and their expulsion from China, the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) continued to use it with great profit, only emphasizes the perfection of this Mongol institution.

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VI

Intelligence in the Muscovite State

Russia under Mongol Rule—Political Growth of the Moscow Grand Dukes—Reforms of Ivan III—Introduction of a State Post on Mongol Prototypes; Its Organization—Herberstein and von Staden on the Muscovite Information Service—Ivan IV's Reorganization of the Post Service—Treatment of Foreign Embassies—*Opričnina* and Secret Police.

After the Russian principalities had been finally conquered, the Mongol khans appointed princes and grand dukes by issuing a special document called *jarlyk,* which also contained an enumeration of the taxes to be collected from each principality and either sent or brought to the khans. These taxes were computed from the result of the census of the population made by Mongol officers. Both princes and grand dukes frequently made the long and dangerous journey from Batu's Horde to the Great Khan at Karakorum. Carpini tells us that Michael, Duke of Chernigov, and his companion the boyar Feodor, were put to death by Batu because, for religious reasons, they refused to pay homage to the idol of Jenghiz Khan, their refusal being regarded as a sign of political disloyalty. The incident took place in September 1246 and, since then, both men have been honored as martyrs by the Russian Church.

During Carpini's stay in Mongolia, Prince Andrew of Chernigov was also slain, and his young brother forced to take the widow as his wife. Even more tragic was the fate of Jaroslav I, Grand Duke of Vladimir (1238–1247) whose duty it was to be present in Karakorum at the election of Güyük as khan. The mother of the khan offered him a drink with her own hand as if to do him honor. He died seven days later in his lodgings. Carpini says that his body turned bluish-gray in a strange fashion, suggesting that he had been poisoned. Because of such journeys, the Russian princes and many of their boyars were familiar with the Mongol post service, not only in the Golden Horde, but also on the long road between Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde, and Karakorum.

The question as to whether the Mongols extended their post and messenger system throughout the conquered Russian lands has not yet been satisfactorily answered. There are many indications that something similar had existed in Russia during the Kievan period. The chronicles often mention the obligation to provide guides, carts, horses, and other commodities to the envoys of the princes. The authorities of the communes were responsible for the supply of these services by the population. I. Ia. Gurl'and, *K'voprosu*, pp. 23–29, has collected enough evidence from chronicles and other documents to show that the princes sent messengers to the grand duke and to the other princes, and that communications between the capitals of the principalities existed. This, of course, does not mean that there was a regular post system with relay stations.

It is quite probable that the Mongols contented themselves with this kind of communications system, making the princes responsible for its operation for the use of their own envoys and officers. Among the many taxes imposed upon the inhabitants was that of the *jam*, the Mongol name for postal service. It seems, however, that the money collected was for disbursement to the general post service in Mongol lands. There is no evidence that the Mongols had asked the Russians to maintain a similar system, with relay stations, as in Mongolia.

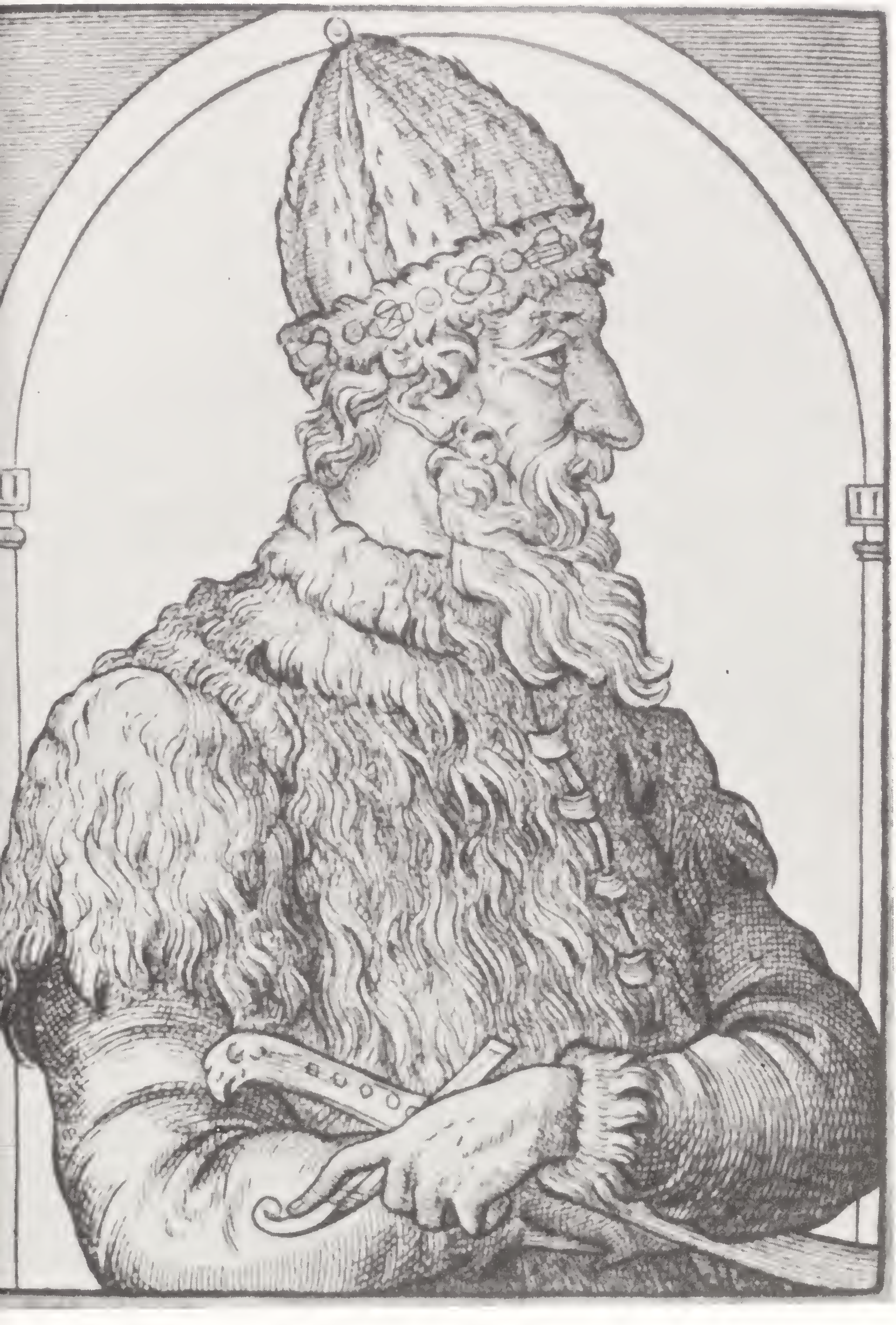
At the beginning of the Mongol rule over Russia, the taxes were collected by Mongol officials called *baskaks*, but towards the end of the thirteenth century the grand dukes themselves were commissioned to collect the taxes in their principalities under the supervision of the Mongol commissioners. Later on it became their own responsibility entirely. From then on they not only supervised the conscription of recruits for the khan's army, but were also responsible for the maintenance of communications between Sarai, capital of the Golden Horde, and the principalities, by providing horses and other commodities for Mongol messengers and officers.

This seems to be an adequate explanation of the problem of the post, because the *jam* as a tax is mentioned for the first time in a document of Vasilij I dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century.

After liberation from the Mongol yoke, which was facilitated by the slow disintegration of the Golden Horde into several khanates, the grand dukes of Moscow were able to accelerate the unification of the other Russian principalities with their own. The principle of religious unity of all Russia was of help to them in this task, following the transfer of the Kievan metropolitan dignity to Moscow. The idea of the reunification of the Russian lands led Basil II, Ivan III, Basil III, and Ivan IV into the merciless annexation of independent principalities, into the victorious struggle with Tver', and with the republics of Novgorod and Pskov.

With the growth of the political power of the Muscovite grand princes, even the Russian political system underwent a slow transformation. The democratic traits of the political system during the Kievan period disappeared during the Mongol occupation; the most remarkable of these were the assemblies of the people (*veche*) which shared with the princes certain administrative and military powers. But the people lost all their privileges to the princes, thus confirming their power and enabling them to introduce in Moscow, and in the acquired principalities, an autocratic, monarchic régime. The ideological roots of the Muscovite autocracy are Byzantine and were spread by Russian ecclesiastics, but the experiences of the princes with the autocratic and tyrannical Mongol system had furthered the growth of Muscovite autocracy. The autocratic régime needed first of all a good army, and in this respect the Muscovite princes followed the Mongol pattern. The Mongols had allowed them to keep only their retinues, and so the grand princes not only kept their retinues but added to them men bound to military service and called, in Mongol fashion, *dvor* (court). After their liberation the princes not only continued to keep their military *dvor*, but they also retained the universal conscription introduced by the Mongols. Their army was divided into five divisions as was the Mongol army, and Mongol military tactics and weapons were also adopted. This reorganization of the Muscovite army according to the Mongol pattern gave the new autocrats considerable military strength, which contemporary Western rulers were unable to match.

Changes in the administration of Muscovy also often followed the Mongol pattern. The grand princes retained the Mongol system of taxation to which the population had become accustomed and which proved highly effective. Justice was administered in the cities by their lieutenants, and in the rural districts by district chiefs appointed by the grand prince. They were charged respectively with the general administration of the cities and rural districts. They were permitted to retain part of the court fees and allowed to "feed themselves" off their districts. Besides administration by state offi-



Ivan III the Great (A. Thevet, "Cosmographic Universelle," Paris, 1575).

cials, there also existed in Muscovy a manorial system to which the domains of the grand princes, the boyars, and the Church were subjected.

The creation of military fiefs was initiated by Ivan III, who distributed the conquered territory as an endowment to the members of his *dvor*, and to boyars who entered his service from other principalities or even from the remaining khanates. The endowments were known as *pomestie* and the new squires, having no other means of existence, were bound to render faithful and effective military service to the grand prince. Their sons were forced to enter military service at the age of fifteen years, and more land was granted only if the territory given to their fathers was too small for their sustenance. By this system Ivan III not only broke the power of the old nobility in the conquered territories, but also created a most reliable corps bound to support the centralized Muscovite government. This manorial system became the solid basis of the Muscovite military organization during the following three centuries.

In order to enhance their dignity the grand princes introduced a special ceremonial at their court, displayed especially during audiences granted to foreign envoys. It is often believed that this originated from the Byzantine ceremonial introduced into Moscow by Ivan III after his marriage in 1472 to Sophia (Zoë Palaeologus) niece of the last Byzantine emperor. However, the grand princess, who was educated in Rome, could have known very little of Byzantine ceremonial and, after her marriage, exerted little influence on Ivan III. The Muscovite ceremonial, described in detail by Herberstein, and also by a companion of Possevino sent by Gregory XIII to the court of Ivan IV, also called Ivan "the Terrible" (1577), recalls rather Mongol usage in which were traces of both Arab and Byzantine ceremonial. The papal envoys were received by Ivan IV in his summer residence at Staritza on the Volga river.

The new autocratic régime had need of good communications throughout its whole wide territory in order to obtain rapid information on the situation in the conquered lands, and for the expediting of the great prince's orders to his land representatives. Ivan III understood well this necessity, and he therefore not only used what was left of the old Russian system of mutual communications, but reorganized it according to the Mongol system and extended it throughout his realm. The *jam* tax, introduced by the Mongols, was also reorganized. Instead of the provision of horses and carts by the people, a tax in money was introduced called *jamskija dengi* which was to be paid by all those subjected to tax and even by those who were relieved from general taxation.

After the definitive conquest of Novgorod (1478) and the incorporation of the lands of the former republic, "Lord Great Novgorod," Ivan III saw that Moscow needed a speedy communications service with the annexed city, where the danger of a revolt by the disgruntled citizens who had lost both freedom and high position in the east was great. The only means was the erection of a post with relays well supplied with horses for the messengers to bring information, or to carry orders from their new master. Spaced post stations, or *jami,* were erected along the whole road. We learn of the existence of such a road from a travel document given by Ivan III in 1489 to his envoy, Jurig Trachaniot, an educated Greek in Muscovite service, quoted by G. Alef. He was sent with the state secretary, Vasilij Kulešin, to the Emperor Maximilian with instructions to ascertain the conditions under which it would be possible to conclude an alliance with the Emperor against Poland-Lithuania. In the document is explained the manner in which both envoys were to travel and how they would be provided "from *jam* to *jam*" with horses, wagons (*telegas* with two horses), and with "*korm*" or provisions, a carcass of sheep, three hens, and bread being especially mentioned.

In 1485 Ivan III annexed the republic of Tver', and it was necessary to erect *jam* stations along the whole route from Tver' to Moscow. In 1493, in the conflicts with Pskov, the same post system had to be extended to the Pskov frontier. The city was annexed by Basil III in 1510. Pskov and Novgorod also needed to observe the situation in Lithuania and Poland and inform Moscow of events in those countries. About the year 1501, *jami* were erected along the Možajsk road to the newly-conquered Lithuanian land, first via Kazena, and then as far as Dorogobuž. We learn from a document of 1504 that similar stations were built along the road from Moscow to Kaluga on the middle Oka, and later to Vorotynsk.

From the above-mentioned documents we also learn that the postal roads were placed under the care of overseers. To the envoy Trachaniot, Golochvastow acted as overseer, or *pristav,* for the route from Moscow to Novgorod; Surmin, another *pristav,* was responsible for the next stage from Novgorod to Reval.

These roads were most important to Ivan III because of military conflict with Lithuania. But the Mongol khanate of Kazan also required surveillance. Soon after 1490, Ivan erected post stations to Murom, and from there it was easy to reach Nižnij Novgorod by the river Oka.

It is evident that the *jam* system contributed in great part to the unification of northeastern Russia and facilitated the administration of Muscovite lands. In his testament of 1504, Ivan III stressed the obligation of his son, Basil III, "to keep *jami* and carts on the roads in these places where there were *jami* and wagons during my lifetime."

The creation of a postal system with relays was a grand achievement. It required planning, erection of relays, often the building of villages for the provisioning of the *jami* and their personnel with food, fodder, horses, and carts. The larger towns able to provide the necessary equipment for the *jami* were compensated by the treasury; it was the responsibility of the prince to supply horses by the hundreds for the messenger service. Use was made of the rivers for the messenger service and for the transport of envoys, boats and rowers being provided by the governors. During the winter months sledges were used on the roads instead of *telegas*.

In the capital special clerks were charged with the formulation of the road documents and to account for the numbers of passengers taking part in official missions. They estimated the number of horses, *telegas*, and boats necessary for such missions and calculated the quantity of both food and fodder required at each station. With regard to envoys from other nations, the clerks were instructed to observe their eating habits, as no pork could be offered to Mongols, and no alcohol to Muslims. The necessary papers, written in the name of the grand duke, were handed to the overseer, or *pristav*, who was given precise instructions as to how to guide the missions; he obtained clearances for travel through the provinces, and had the authority to requisition supplementary provisions. These overseers, because they were familiar with the customs of foreign peoples, were sometimes chosen as envoys themselves.

The administration of the post was organized according to the Mongol system; this is documented by the designation in Russian of the functionaries in charge of the upkeep of the post roads. The postmaster was called *jamčik;* the supervisor of bridges *mostovčik;* the inspector of the roads *dorožnik;* and the officer who cared for the river transport *lodejščik;* his colleague who watched over the beaches and the ports *poberežnik*, and the master of the post stations *jurtči*.

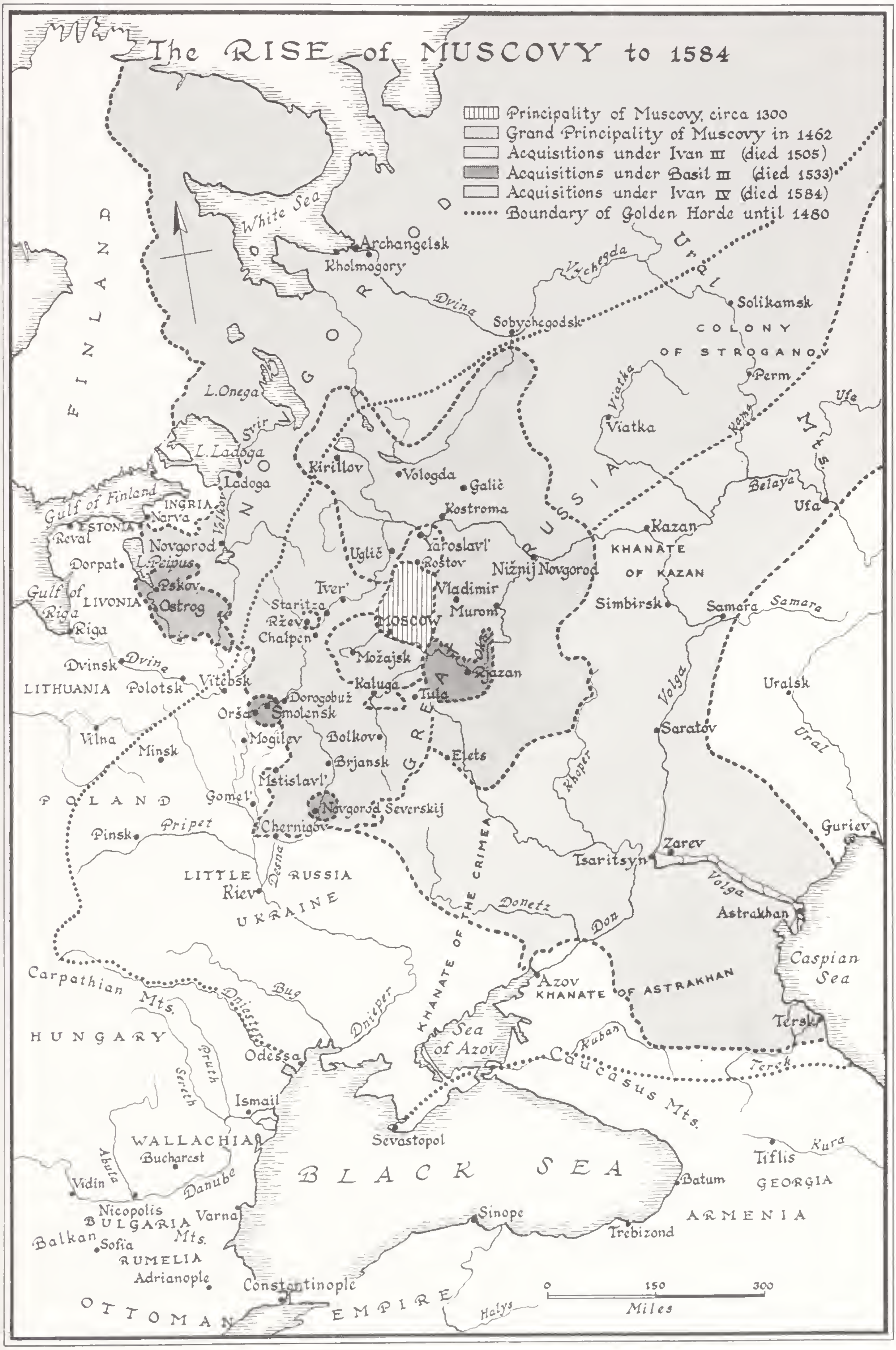
The Russians were thus the first European nation to establish a regular postal state service. This was something unheard of in western Europe, where knowledge of Muscovy and its régime was very slight. Fortunately, we possess an important historical source on Muscovy of this period, written by Baron Sigismund von Herberstein, who twice went to Moscow as envoy of the Emperors Maximilian and Charles V. His *Rerum Muscovitarum Commentarii*, first published in Vienna in 1549, was the first description of the new state. It appeared in several editions in Latin, German, and Italian. It was mostly from Herberstein's description that Western Europe learned the interesting details about Russia and her post installations. Fortunately Herberstein was well prepared for his embassies. He was born in Carinthia, where he was in touch with the Slovene population, a circumstance which facilitated his understanding of Russian. He was well educated at the University of Vienna and had served in the army, but from 1515 on the Emperor Maximilian used his services in diplomacy. His first embassy to Moscow in 1516 was less successful than the second, as Basil III did not accept the emperor's invitation to enter into peaceful relations with the Polish king. His second embassy to Basil III in 1526 fared better, as he was of help in arranging an armistice between Poland and Muscovy. He stayed in Moscow for seven months during his first embassy, and for nine months the second time. He was both a sharp and intelligent observer, and therefore his account of Muscovite life in the sixteenth century is a masterpiece, full of interesting diplomatic, geographical, political, and folklore descriptions.

When describing the functioning of the Muscovite post, he is well aware that something similar had existed under Imperial Rome, for when speaking of the ducal post stations he makes use of the Latin terms, referring to the ducal messengers as *veredarii* which means "rapid messenger." "The duke," he says, "has postal routes to all parts of his realm, in different places and with a sufficient number of horses. When an official messenger is sent somewhere he obtains a horse immediately without any delay. Moreover, he has the right to choose any horse he wishes." The stations must have been provided with a great number of horses, for Herberstein confesses that when driving from Novgorod to Moscow the *jamčik*, or master of the post station, would offer him thirty, forty, and even fifty horses from which to choose, although the envoy and his suite needed only twelve. The animals were changed for fresh ones at any station, or *jam* and, again, the envoy and his companions were free to make their choice. Both messengers and envoys rode at full speed; should the animals become tired or lame, they were left on the spot and new horses were requisitioned from anyone on the road, or from any settlement. The proprietors of the animals were compensated by the government for their losses. It was the duty of the *jamčik* to find the abandoned animals and take care of them at this *jam*.

Thanks to such perfect organization of the Muscovite state post, one of Herberstein's servants was able to ride to Moscow from Novgorod in seventy-two hours, which meant that he rode an average of 133 miles (214.03 km.) each day for three successive days. Such an achievement was not possible in the lands of contemporary western Europe. There are indications that even greater speed could be achieved along the Muscovite state post in emergencies, as we learn from other descriptions made by envoys and visitors. The adventurer Heinrich von Staden, who offered his services to Ivan IV and who resided in Muscovy between 1560 and 1570, speaks with respect of this organization. "The *jami*," he says (p. 59), "are erected at different distances and provided with good horses. It is thus possible to reach any frontier of the state from Moscow in six days." Von Staden speaks from his own experience. He effected his journey from Dorpat to Moscow (1,400 km.) in six days. In 1476 A. Contarini, a Venetian envoy, took eight days to travel from Novgorod to Moscow, but this was in pre-post days and travel was poorly organized, as can be concluded from his complaint. The introduction of the *jam* service by Ivan III after his definite conquest of Novgorod made travelling on this road quicker and more comfortable.

Ivan IV continued the building of *jami* although, as von Staden observes (p. 190), it cost him very large sums of money. The English ambassador, Sir Jerome Horsey (1587), when describing his embassy, speaks with great respect (p. 206) of the achievements of Ivan IV, enumerating his conquests. This ruler, he says, not only founded and endowed more than sixty monasteries, but he built altogether (p. 208) one hundred and fifty-five fortified places in all parts of his realm, well garrisoned with warriors. "He built three hundred towns in vast places and wildernesses, called *jami* of a distance of a mile or two in length; gave every inhabitant a proportion of land to keep so many speedy horses for his use as occasion requires." It seems, according to this account, that the inhabitants of the new settlements with relay stations were given parcels of land in order to provide the *jami* with strong horses and good service. Gurl'and (pp. 176 ff.) calls them *slobody*.

This interest of Ivan IV in building new postal roads is explained by his policy. He was anxious to intensify commercial relations with England, and the discovery of the White Sea route by the English required the extension of *jami* in the north to aid English merchants whose wares were welcome in Muscovy, and who extended their commercial activities even to the territory of the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan subjugated by the Muscovite ruler. The port of Archangelsk, through which English merchants penetrated into the


The RISE of MUSCOVY to 1584
▥ Principality of Muscovy circa 1300
☐ Grand Principality of Muscovy in 1462
☐ Acquisitions under Ivan III (died 1505)
▨ Acquisitions under Basil III (died 1533)
☐ Acquisitions under Ivan IV (died 1584)
······ Boundary of Golden Horde until 1480
White Sea
Archangelsk
Kholmogory
NOVGOROD
FINLAND
Dvina
Vychegda
Sobychegodsk
Ural Mts.
Solikamsk
COLONY OF STROGANOV
Perm
Viatka
Kama
Ufa
Belaya
L. Onega
Svir
L. Ladoga
Ladoga
Volkov
Kirillov
Vologda
Galič
Kostroma
Yaroslavl'
Uglič
Rostov
Vladimir
Nižnij Novgorod
RUSSIA
Kazan
KHANATE OF KAZAN
Simbirsk
Samara
Gulf of Finland
INGRIA
Narva
ESTONIA
Reval
Novgorod
Dorpat
L. Peipus
Pskov
Ostrog
Gulf of Riga
LIVONIA
Riga
Tver'
Staritza
Ržev
Chalpen
MOSCOW
Murom
Možajsk
Oka
Rjazan
Kaluga
Tula
GREAT RUSSIA
Dvinsk
Dvina
LITHUANIA
Polotsk
Vitebsk
Dorogobuž
Orša
Smolensk
Mogilev
Bolkov
Brjansk
Elets
Volga
Saratov
Uralsk
Ural
Vilna
Minsk
POLAND
Gomel'
Mstislavl'
Novgorod Severskij
Chernigov
Pripet
Pinsk
Khoper
LITTLE RUSSIA
Desna
Kiev
UKRAINE
KHANATE OF THE CRIMEA
Donetz
Don
Tsaritsyn
Zarev
Volga
Guriev
Astrakhan
Caspian Sea
Azov
KHANATE OF ASTRAKHAN
Carpathian Mts.
Bug
Dniester
Dnieper
Sea of Azov
Kuban
Caucasus Mts.
Terek
Tersk
HUNGARY
Pruth
Sereth
Odessa
Ismail
Sevastopol
WALLACHIA
Bucharest
Aluta
Vidin
Danube
BLACK SEA
Tiflis
Kura
GEORGIA
Batum
ARMENIA
Nicopolis
BULGARIA
Varna
Balkan Mts.
Sofia
RUMELIA
Adrianople
Sinope
Trebizond
Constantinople
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Halys
0 150 300
Miles

interior of Muscovy, was open to navigation only during the short summer months; therefore Ivan IV desired to conquer Livonia for its Baltic ports. He prepared his campaign carefully, his first step being to extend the *jam* service to the frontier of Livonia. The Livonian embassy, which appeared in Moscow in 1554 to plead without result for a prolonged peace treaty, observed these preparations along the route to their capital. They saw newly-built post stations at every four or five miles to which huge stables were attached. Long trains of sledges loaded with materials for war were already moving down the new road.

Further preparations were being made for the attack on Sweden in 1555, the object being to forge a road to Livonia along the Gulf of Finland. Following this Ivan IV began his Baltic campaign in 1558. The Baltic war, however, proved to be very long and onerous, as Ivan IV battled not only the Livonian forces, but the Swedes and Lithuanians as well, both of whom were anxious to keep Muscovy out of the Baltic sea ports. The *jam* organization proved its usefulness to Ivan IV, as he was able to obtain information almost daily about the situation on the battlefield, and the lively diplomatic activity to which the conflict gave rise required the receipt and despatch of numerous envoys along the new *jam* post.

The post institution had its center in Moscow and, according to von Staden, it was first called *Jamskaja Izba*. It was probably Ivan IV who reorganized the center, creating a special ministry of the post called *Jamskoj prikaz,* for this is the name given to it in documents after 1574. Its activities are now better known through the publication by Russian scholars of works concerning its functions, and of the *verstbooks* giving the names of stations and the distances from Moscow, together with indication of how many days were needed to reach their destinations. It seems that under Ivan IV the *Jamskoj prikaz* was in possession of a geographical work describing the roads and giving the distances of the whole state of Muscovy, the original of which is lost. It was compiled not only for the *Jamskoj prikaz,* but also for the war ministry, or *Razrjadnyj prikaz.*

The *jam* roads were also open to use by foreign envoys, as has been already mentioned. Von Staden described in a few words (p. 111) how the envoys of foreign states were greeted at the frontier by many officials and by the people. After a solemn reception they were given into the charge of an official, or *pristav,* whose duty it was to guide them through the inhabited country to where the grand duke awaited them. This was a precaution to hide from them the direct route and from seeing the poorly populated and waste lands.

They were strictly prevented from seeing strangers, and, should there be other foreign envoys staying at the grand duke's residence, their presence and their names were kept secret from each other. The grand duke endeavored to obtain information from each of them, but kept them in ignorance of the situation in his own country.

The information given by von Staden is confirmed by Antonio Possevino, who was sent by Pope Gregory XIII to Ivan IV in 1581. In chapter II of his *De rebus Moscoviticis Commentarius* Possevino criticizes the reports of different envoys who speak of Muscovy as a very populated country, an impression created by the fact that when foreign envoys travelled to Moscow, the people from nearby villages were ordered to line the roads through which they passed.

There are several descriptions given by envoys and foreign merchants explaining how they were treated in Moscow. V. Ključevskij, using mainly the written accounts by S. von Herberstein (1517), Jakob von Ulfeld (1575, 1578), Possevino, Contarini (1473), Olearius (1633), A. von Meyerberg (1661–1663), A. Lyseck (1675), and B. L. F. Tanner (1678), gives a vivid picture of the activities of the envoys in the capital, their receptions by the grand dukes, and the diplomatic transactions with their Muscovite counterparts. The diplomatic receptions in Moscow followed an elaborate ceremonial, and the streets were full of people curious to see the foreigners. Muscovite cavalry in bright uniforms preceded the convoy, and companies of Muscovite *streltsy* (infantry carrying muskets) formed a guard of honor. The envoys were greeted in the name of the grand duke by the boyars wearing rich and expensive clothes. All this display was designed to impress the visitors with the fitness of the army and with the wealth of the ducal court. They were lodged in a special house which, in the sixteenth century, was poorly furnished. Their suite obtained the necessary food, as well as fodder for their animals and wood for their kitchen. However, they were not permitted to go to the bazaar themselves to buy their own provisions.

A new building was erected during the first half of the seventeenth century, replacing the old one which was destroyed by fire. It was nearer to the Kremel (Kremlin), had three floors in a quadrangle, and a very spacious court inside. The tower above the entrance had three balconies from which the envoys enjoyed a beautiful view of the city. The house was richly furnished, and the food for the suites of envoys was prepared in three kitchens. For reasons of security the windows were small, with more iron and stone than glass. The building must have been of a great size, for in 1678 it accommodated the 1,500 men who accompanied the Polish ambassador. The main entrance was firmly shut and well guarded by the *streltsy* who, sometimes, were also posted at the windows of the whole building in order to prevent any communication with the members of an embassy by curious citizens, or foreigners living in Moscow. Permission to leave the building was granted only for specific reasons, and it was necessary for a *pristav* to accompany the member of the embassy during his trip, thus "protecting" him from contact with the curious and from any foreigner. No one was permitted to leave the ambassadorial quarters before the envoy was granted his first audience by the grand duke. Any correspondence which the envoys tried to send abroad was censored, its contents copied for the archives, and the letters destroyed. It was exceedingly difficult for foreign merchants, and others, to obtain permission to see the envoys representing their own sovereigns, and the reverse also held true.

These limitations were relaxed to some extent during the second half of the seventeenth century, by which time the Muscovites had become accustomed to the presence of many foreign embassies, but even so the envoys and their suites were kept under discreet but strict surveillance, even when allowed to move about outside freely and admire the city's monuments.

One can see from these descriptions that the Muscovites treated the envoys in a fashion similar to that of the Byzantines and the Arabs. The principle was to endeavor to obtain as much information as possible from them and, at the same time, prevent them from seeing in Muscovy what the government wished to hide from them. The *pristav* who accompanied one of the envoys has been very well described by a Dutch ambassador named Brederode who says of him that he is pretending to be a master of ceremonies, but is in reality a spy.

All acts concerning relations with a foreign power and all reports made by the embassies were copied into volumes and kept in the *prikaz* of the embassies. The first collection of this kind dates from the early years of the reign of Ivan III, which contains documents concerning the relations with Lithuania, the Golden Horde, and the German emperor. Documents about Poland were preserved in a special *Panskij prikaz;* the treasury (*Kazemyj prikaz*) dealt mostly with eastern affairs and with embassies. It was not until the seventeenth century that special departments dealing with the affairs of European countries were gradually established. The Muscovite diplomats often manifested a very astute attitude when dealing with foreign envoys.

Foreign merchants were also under strict control. They were interrogated at the frontier post and their merchandise inspected; if it was found to be welcome in Moscow, they were granted permission to use the *jam* post. A *pristav* accompanied them as a guard, thus preventing them from taking a different route and so, perhaps, observing things forbidden to foreigners.

We know little of the activities of the *jamtchiks* and their subordinates other than their responsibility of keeping the post organization in good order. But, naturally, the grand dukes expected from them the same services as did the Mongol khans, namely, information as to the attitude of the population, keeping a watchful eye on the functionaries, denouncing any suspect attitude of those in high places, and similar reports. This institution enabled the grand dukes to keep the boyars under surveillance, and to command respect for the authority they wielded over the principalities annexed by Muscovy.

We do not find any information about the creation of a secret police to maintain order in the interior before the reign of Ivan IV. This supreme power over all subjects surprised Herberstein, as no western ruler would even dream of such an autocratic development. The Englishman Giles Fletcher, who visited Muscovy seventy years after Herberstein, called this power quite simply tyrannical. This development was due to the new concept of society and its relation to the state which was slowly introduced into Muscovy with the growth and spread of monarchic and autocratic ideas. All classes of the nation were bound to the service of the state. The former appanage of princes and boyars lost their privileges and became servants of the tsar. Attempts to resist this new régime were particularly extreme under Ivan IV, but he smashed this opposition with a violent blow directed against the princes and the old boyar families, by creating a new class of the *opričniki*, men who were wholly devoted to the tsar and chosen by him (1565). The *opričniki*, selected from among the *dvorjane* and the petty nobility, were settled on the hereditary lands of the old boyar families in the central part of Muscovy. The former owners were, in part, mercilessly exterminated and, in part, resettled in newly annexed territories on the borders of the state. This oppressive measure required the creation of a body of special guards, or political police at court, to combat attempts at treason. A reign of terror was thus introduced by these brutal changes which lasted for twenty years. In this way the scheme of secret police was introduced into Muscovy which continued to function in various ways under the reign of the tsars.

As we have already said, the Russians were the first nation in Europe to have introduced a well-organized postal service in their state. However, it should be stressed that their postal system was not entirely an imitation of the Mongol practice. Ivan III built his postal system on the basis already formed by the Russian princes of the Kievan period. There appears to be an analogy between the Kievan practice and the communication system which existed in China during its feudal period, as described before in Chapter V. If the Mongols had contented themselves with the Kievan system of communications between the principalities, as seems most probable, then we have to assume that it was quite advanced. If the Mongols had not disrupted the development of Russia so thoroughly and for such a long period, we could assume that the Kievan communication system would have developed into something similar to that which the Mongols had implanted in their empire.

Imitation of the Mongol system accelerated this development, and it is the great merit of Ivan III to have seen its advantages and to have made use of the centuries-old experiences which other eastern nations had accumulated, and which the Mongols had inherited. It was also Ivan III who recognized the importance of a good intelligence service for the purposes of a centralized government—again the first European ruler to exhibit such wisdom and statecraft. Fortunately, the reign of this able ruler is now more appreciated by historians. J. L. I. Fennell, in his book *Ivan the Great of Moscow*, has described the statesmanship of Ivan III to western scholars. This ruler deserves more attention also for his achievements in the economic and material advancement of his nation. He laid the foundations for the expansion and grandeur of Russia and therefore he fully deserves the title, Ivan III the Great.

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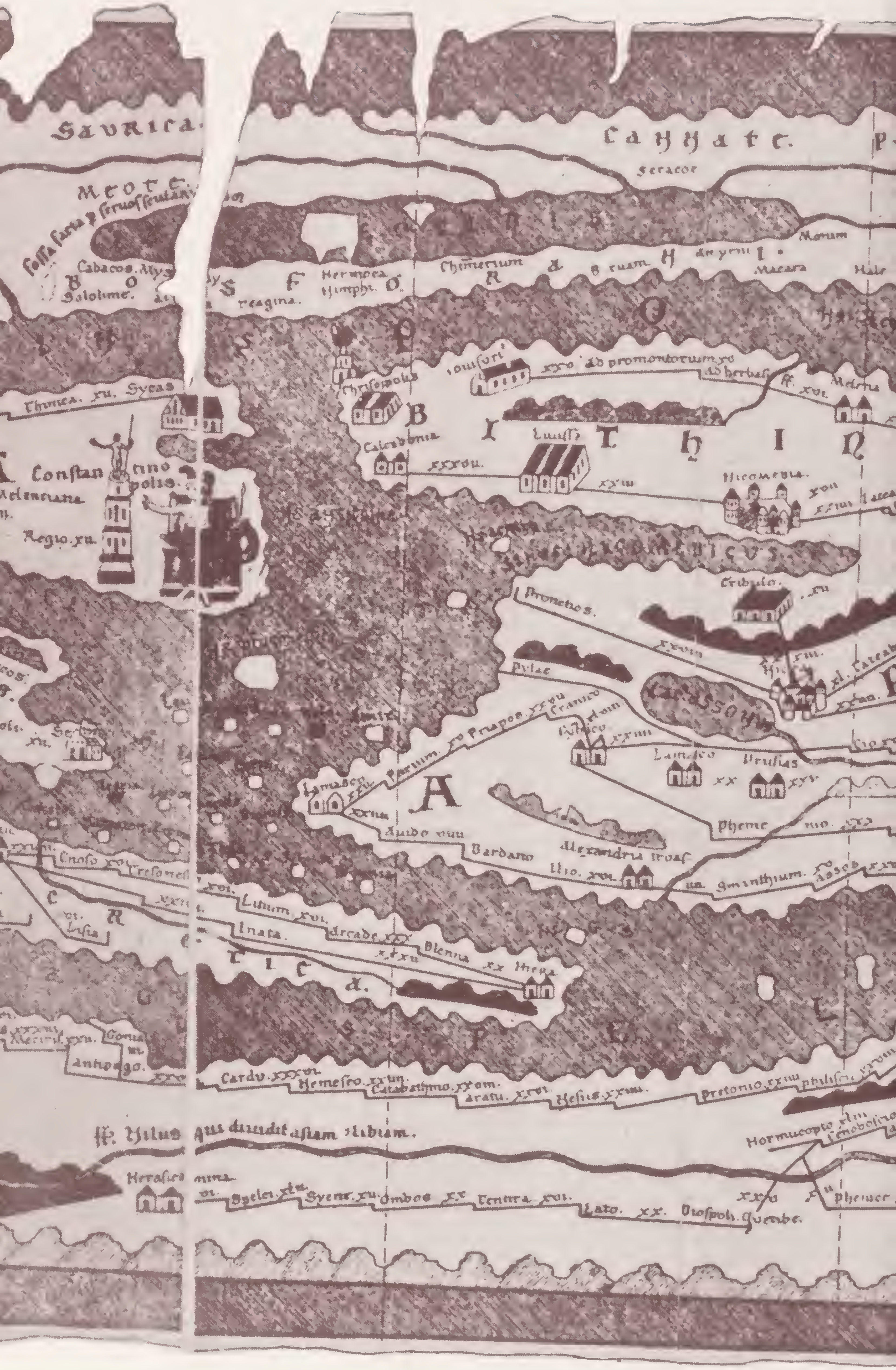
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Aratu
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Pretonio
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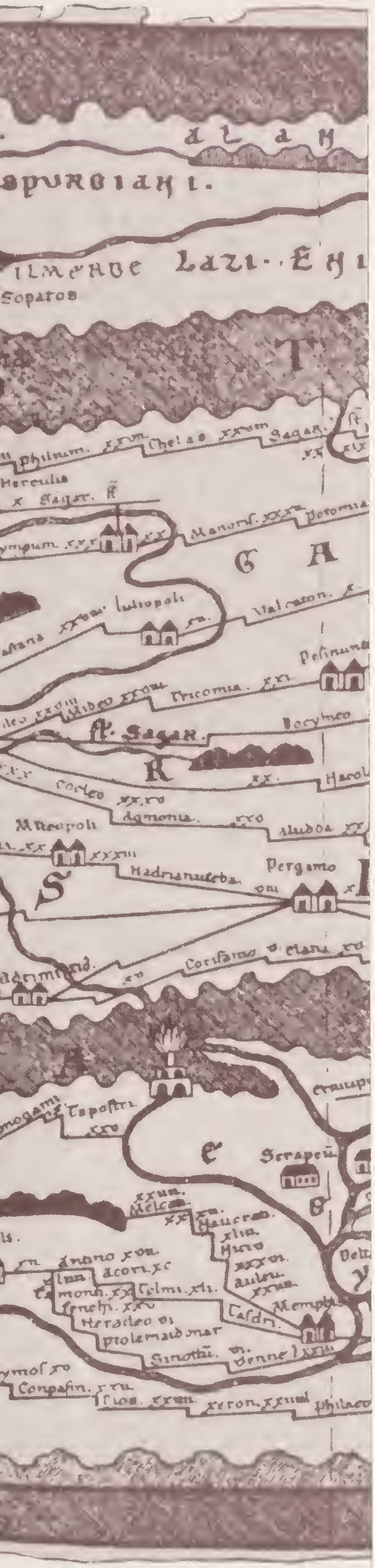

(continued from front flap)

1948 Dr. Dvornik, Professor of Byzantine History at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in Washington, received an unexpected visitor, General William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, who had served as Director of the Office of Strategic Services in World War II. General Donovan, it developed, was planning a complete history of intelligence services, and was seeking a scholar qualified to write the story of the origins and early development of intelligence techniques.

Dr. Dvornik, a world-renowned authority on the history and political philosophies of ancient and medieval cultures, accepted the challenge, and began the extensive research required for such a formidable project. General Donovan's death in 1959 apparently terminated the rest of the projected history, but Dr. Dvornik continued to seek out relevant intelligence material, which at first he called "a by-product" of his other historical researches. Because General Donovan's project had been intended for a wide audience of intelligence professionals, Dr. Dvornik restricted himself to a narrative and informative approach, eschewing the conventional footnotes. However, much of the work had to be based on original sources, which are quoted in the text, so that each of the six chapters has a full bibliography of sources and commentaries. The result is a series of absorbing accounts, giving a behind-the-scenes dimension of history seldom encountered in scholarly literature, with a special relevance to present-day national and international events.

Dr. Dvornik concludes:

"This present work is a fresh attempt to treat a subject generally neglected by historians, and it may help us better to understand certain historical events, both past and present. It will not replace the project which General Donovan was prevented from realizing and in which I had the impression he wished to pay tribute to his collaborators among the Allies. However, this attempt may show us, as he wished to emphasize, the importance of a good intelligence service for the security of our country, as well as the dangers inherent in its abuse."

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FRANCIS DVORNIK

FRANCIS DVORNIK, born in Chomyz, Czechoslovakia, in 1893, was ordained in 1916 and received his D.D. in 1920; he received the Diploma of the *Ecole des Sciences politique* in Paris in 1923, and the degree of *Docteur des lettres* from the Sorbonne in 1926. He was appointed Professor of Church History at Charles University in Prague in 1928, and became Dean of its Faculty of Theology in 1935. In 1940 he became Schlumberger Lecturer at the *Collège de France* in Paris; he was appointed Birbeck Lecturer at Cambridge University in 1946, and in 1949 came to the United States as Professor of Byzantine History at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies of Harvard University. Since 1964 he has continued his research and teaching as Professor Emeritus at Dumbarton Oaks. Dr. Dvornik is the author of sixteen books and monographs, of which several have become classics in the fields of Byzantine and Slavic studies. He has also published a large number of articles in scholarly publications throughout the world.

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